THE GUIDE TO COMICS • 46

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Prologue

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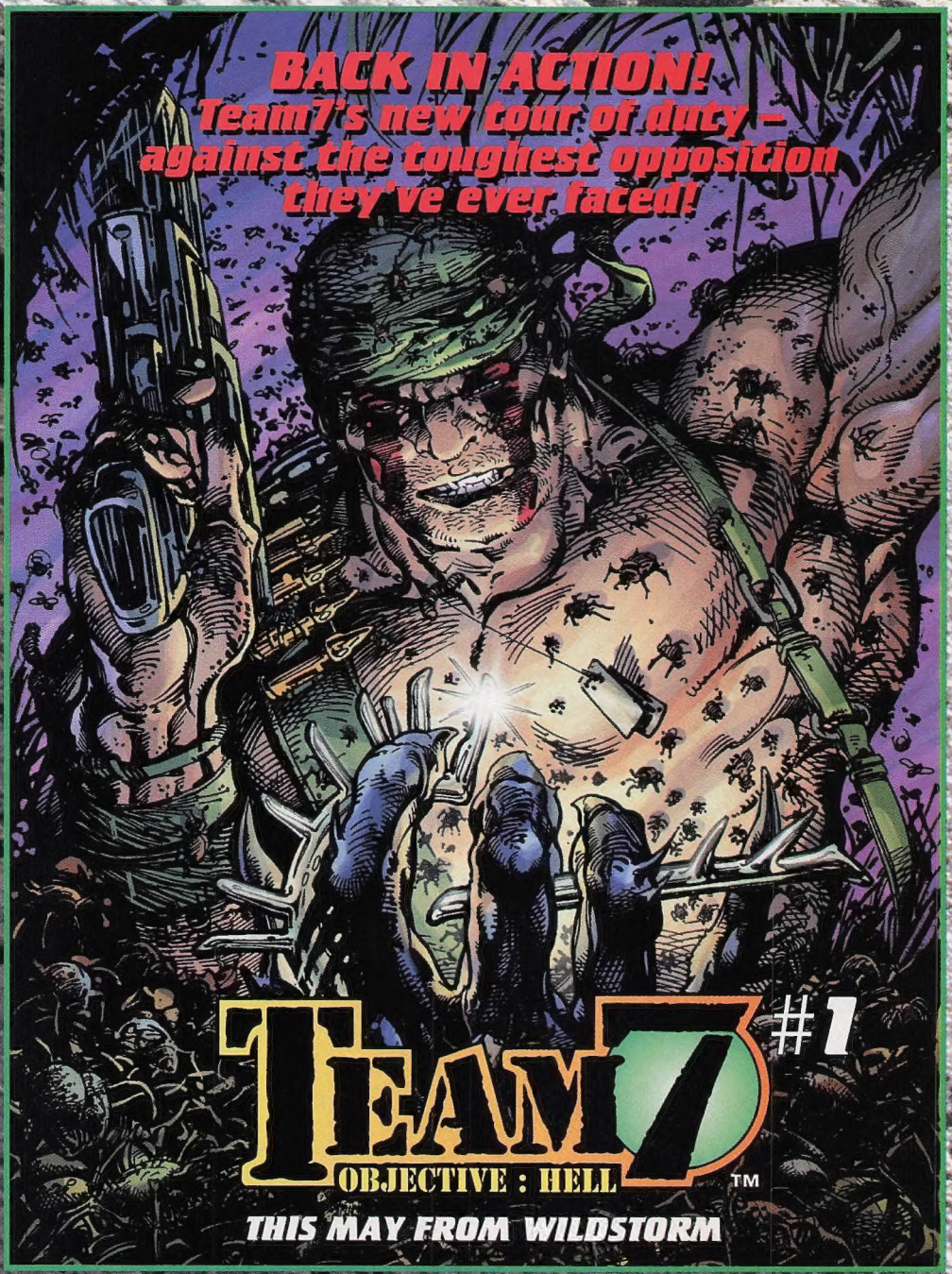

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STRANGERS IN
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CHRIS CLAREMONT. DWAYNE TURNER.
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Volume 1
Number 46
JUNE 1995

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BATMAN THE MOVIES, THE COMICS, THE LEGEND. PAGE 36

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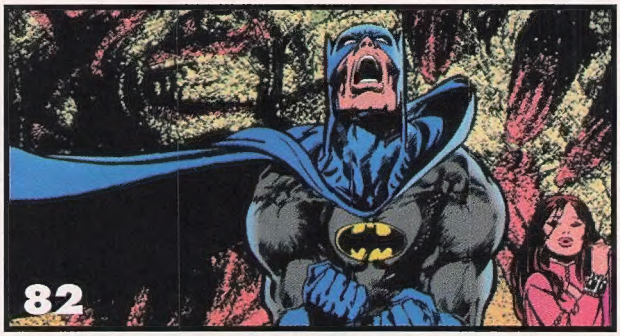

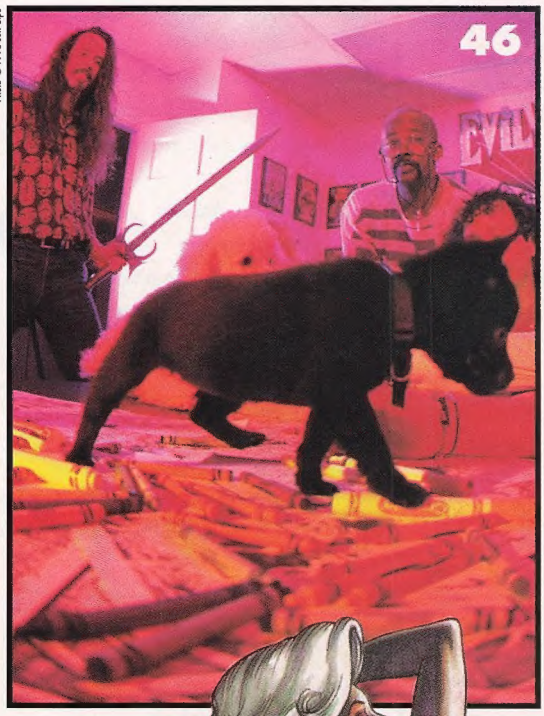

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WIN!

GET YOUR ART IN THE *LADY DEATH* LINGERIE SPECIAL!

If you think Kathy Ireland looks good in a swimsuit... dive into page 56 now! ™ & © Brian Pulido

from the top

WELCOME BACK!

Well, there's been lots of stuff happening in the comic book world these past few months, and there'll be lots more—stay tuned and I'll keep you posted.

The new Batman movie is coming out soon and we all know what that wave feels like. So make sure you check out all of our wacky Batman movie hype stuff.

We also have an interesting Vampirella novella which is done in a new format for our mini-comics, so I hope you enjoy the read.

And hey, check out *Wizard* on America Online starting in early summer under the blanket name of "Wizard World." We'll have some interesting features and a bunch of new material, including behind-the-scenes photos. If you're plugged into AOL, look us up.

Also, keep a lookout for *InQuest*, our new magazine on collectible card games. It's put together by some of the same crew as *Wizard*, so you just know it's going to have some of that *Wizard* charm. If you've ever played collectible card games (like *Magic: The Gathering*), or really want to learn, look for it.

Next month, one of my personal favorite artists does the cover, Simon Bisley. It's his first *Wizard* cover, but I know you'll love it, seeing as how it's arguably the best Judge Dredd cover Simon's ever done. Plus, you can win all sorts of neat autographed stuff by Sylvester Stallone in our big Dredd Contest. So be there.

See ya next month,

Gareb S. Shamus
The Big Cheese

masthead

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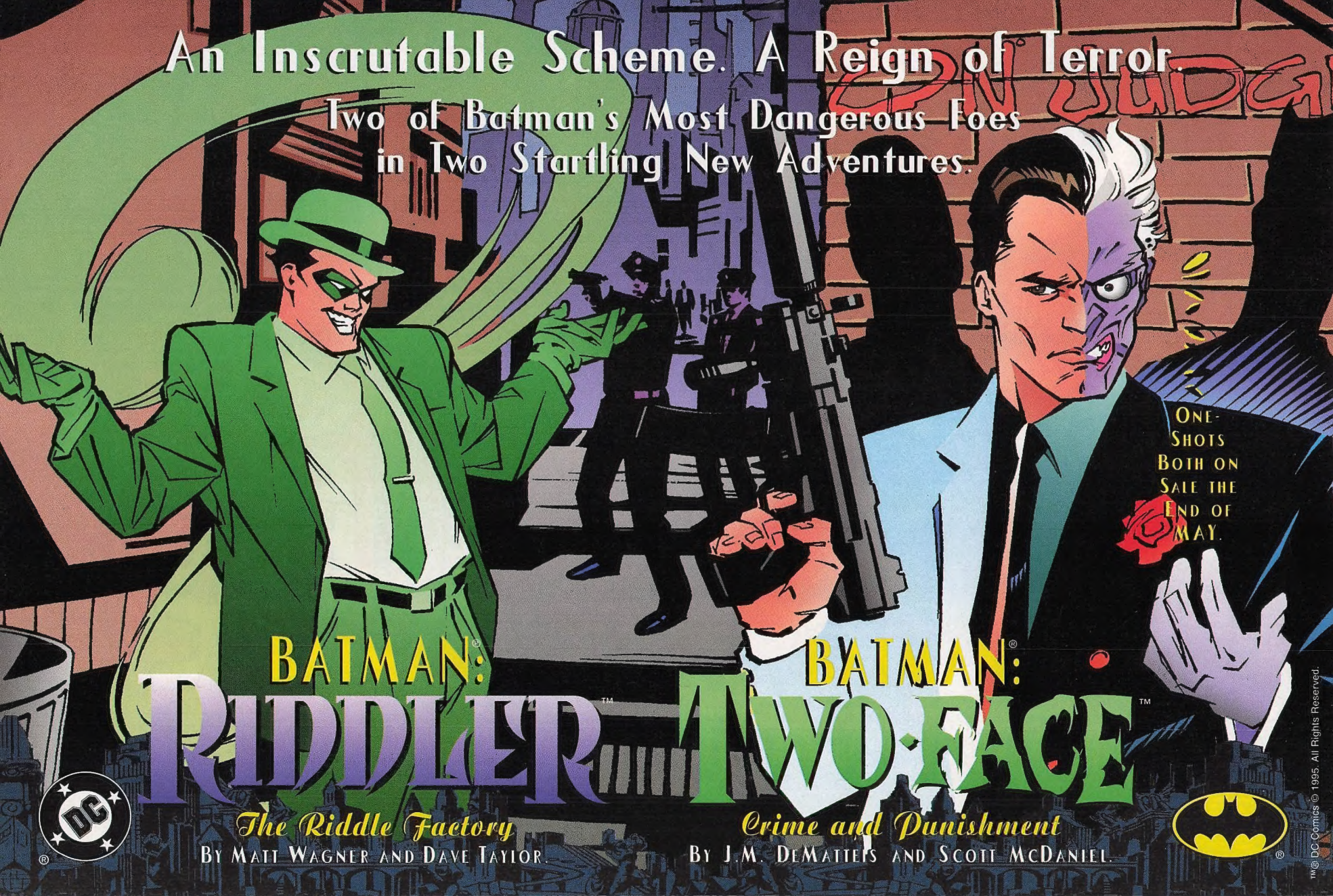
*Monthly Subliminal Plug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YESTERDAY, AN ALIEN INVASION WAS REBUFFED BY A SINGLE HUMAN CHAMPION. LAST NIGHT, A COMPLEX AND SINISTER CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY WAS SHATTERED BEYOND REPAIR. AND THIS AFTERNOON, TERRORISTS ATTACKED A TICKER-TAPE PARADE AND THE GUESTS OF HONOR MOPPED UP THE STREETS WITH THEM.

THAT'S LIFE IN THE BIG CITY.

KURT BUSIEK'S

ASTRO CITY

image™

BY KURT BUSIEK, BRENT ANDERSON AND ALEX ROSS

A NEW LOOK AT SUPERHEROES FROM THE CREATORS OF MARVELS.

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AD DESIGN BY COMICRAFT

Magic Words

Alien Art Beats Pants Off of Local Variety

At the risk of starting yet another letters page controversy, let me explicitly state that which I believe to be true: No matter if it's Letter Art, The Drawing Board, or any other art contest, entries we get from foreign countries are just better than ones from the United States. It seems like when given the chance to draw comic art, American entrants will try to copy an existing piece they've seen on a cover or in an ad, while foreign entrants will come up with something original. Why? I have no clue. Are Americans lacking in creativity? I don't think so. Does it have something to do with the way drawing is taught in schools in the U.S. as opposed to elsewhere? Could be. Any opinions?

The big letter topic of the month? "The Age of Apocalypse" story that ran in the X-titles. Yeah, it may seem like old news now, but remember—these were letters mailed a couple months ago. At the time, "The Age" was just starting and everyone seemed pretty confused by it. I must have seen a hundred letters that asked how Wolverine lost his hand. Anyway, I think the overwhelming majority of letter writers who read "The Age of Apocalypse" wound up liking it.

We start this month with an unfortunate fool-and-his-money story...

Dear Wizard,

HELP! I used to order comics from a company called Kingpin Comics in Arizona. After I ordered from them for a while, one of their employees suggested I try a "managed account."

I'll explain how a managed account works. You invest your money in comics with a minimum of $150 at the beginning of each month. They then pick the comics they think will be worth the most money. You don't get to pick the comics but you can tell them which company to invest your money in.

My brother Matthew, my friend Sean, and I invested over $900. When they have chosen the comics, they send you a list of which comics they bought for you and how many of each they bought. They either send your comics to you or keep them in storage for a small monthly fee. I chose to keep them in their storage.

This is the problem: I got a call from Kingpin in July saying that they were downsizing and that they needed to ship our comics out to us. I gave them the information they needed and they said we should receive the comics in about three weeks. The books never showed up in July or August.

In September, I tried calling them but the phone just rang and rang with no answer. I called for several days. I tried their other phone number and I just got an answering machine. For two weeks I left messages. Finally they returned my call and said they were going out of business. An employee said he would call me back. He never called and the phone has since been disconnected.

Kingpin ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

I'm out over $900 and don't know any way to contact them.

Brandon Branco
Ramona, CA

You're probably wazooed. Kingpin has filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy and is now out of business. Your best bet is to contact the Arizona state Attorney General's office and see if you have any legal recourse to recover your lost money.

And all the rest of you cats and kids out there should take this little story to heart. Chances are, if someone wants you to send them money so that they can buy something on your behalf, then won't let you choose what they buy with your money, then offer to not send you what they bought, it's probably a bad deal.

Dear Wizard,

Why doesn't Shaft have a string on his bow? I mean, how else can he shoot arrows?

Chris Kelley
Horseheads, NY

Shaft doesn't have a string on his bow because he really doesn't have a bow at all. What he's got is a "linear accelerator." This high-tech thingamabob creates a small circular field of gravity in which Shaft places a shaft. When he draws the arrow back, a "gravity well" propels the arrow forward. The rest, as they say, is history. Painful history, at that.

That having been said, we now bring you our next dream match-up...

Dear Wizard,

Who would win in a fight between Shaft (Richard Roundtree from the 1970s *Shaft* movies) and Shaft (Jeff Terrell from Youngblood)?

Sandy Anaokar
Indianapolis, IN

Hmmm. That's a tough one. But my vote goes to the Richard Roundtree Shaft. Don't get me wrong—Youngblood's Shaft is one tough cookie. But John Shaft has shown himself to be a real tough customer in no less than three *Shaft* movies and his alter ego, Richard Roundtree, showed some real athletic prowess in those *Battle of the Network Stars* TV competitions. Hey, remember that one where Gabe Kaplan beat Robert Conrad in the 100-yard dash tie-breaker to give ABC the victory over NBC? What a moment!

Dear Wizard,

I started reading comics in 1936 or '37. I stopped reading them somewhere in the late '40s and picked up the habit again in the late '80s. Since I've been thoroughly enjoying comics since the Golden Age, I thought I'd write this letter in hopes that you can supply answers to some questions.

Now I well understand that comics are to be read while taking a grain of salt, so to speak. When one reads comics, one must necessarily suspend a certain amount of logic and go with the flow. We are dealing with fiction, after all. Suspension of disbelief is necessary to enjoying a story. But I don't understand why it's necessary to use the entire contents of several dozen salt shakers just to read some of today's material. For example:

If today's so-called superbeings are actually so super, why do they require such huge weaponry to accomplish their deeds? It is totally unbelievable, even within the realm of comics, that any of the aforementioned superbeings could actually discharge some of these oversized gizmos that are hooked, hung, welded, or super-glued to their appendages without physical loss of same appendage.

And who decreed that all but DC superheroes must have blank-eyed Little Orphan Annie looks? The majority of the characters drawn today don't have pupils, at least whenever they put on a mask. And if they have no eyes, how do they see where they're going? Seems to me the bad guys, unless they're also drawn without eyes, would have a field day with the good guys.

And last but not least, why do most modern characters look alike, both facially and physically? Don't modern creators have enough imagination to create a distinct look in anything other than costumes? Even in the Golden Age, it took more than just a colorful costume to make a superbeing. Most of today's characters have such a lookalike appearance that if they exchanged costumes, the reader would never be able to tell who's who. The ladies all have queen-sized bazooms, wasp waists, and long slender legs. The men all have that Schwarzenegger look. Both men and women have blank-eyed expressions.

Well, that pretty much does it for comic hang-ups that I've developed over the past few years. If you can supply a few answers, I'd appreciate it.

G.L. Curry
Stockton, CA

Now before we dismiss all this as the lunatic ramblings of some cranky old guy who drives 45 miles per hour on the highway (which I would never do anyway, unless I happen to be in Florida, or, as the infamous Pete the Greek calls it, The Waiting Room for the Grim Reaper), let's keep in mind that these are rather common concerns that we hear about the state of today's comics. There really are a lot of silly things going on. Where do the eyes go when the masks go on? What do super-strong characters like Badrock or the Hulk need with guns? And apparently, it's not just me—you take away the costumes and pretty much all of today's characters look the same. Remember when Hawkeye and Captain America, who, facially, look similar, had different bodies in order to tell the two apart? Well, they don't anymore.

This letter shows an interesting perspective. Our buddy G.L. here has been reading comics over a span of 50 years, so it's safe to say that changes in comics are apparent to him. Heck, I'm only a comic book child of the '70s and differences between *Amazing Spider-Man* #150 and #350 are pretty apparent to me. Back in the '70s, things like Kung-Fu comics were all the rage and the characters spent more time on brooding and self-examination than blowing each other away.

Not so today, which brings us to the main point—in comics, as in anything, the old saying that "this too shall pass" always applies. What is fashionable today is garbage tomorrow. Don't like big guns and blank-eyed stares in your comics? Wait. This too shall pass. At various times, the TV show *Miami Vice*, Pet Rocks, the band Wham!, and even Richard Nixon have been fashionable. Just look where they are today.

'Course, when today's style of comics are out of fashion, that will leave a few of today's "big comic talents" out of a job. I can hardly wait. Heh, heh, heh.

Pen Pals

Want to get in touch with your fellow comic fans? Or want them to touch you? Send your name, address, age, gender, and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o Wizard Press, at Magic Words's address on page 16. Hey, make a friend!

Gary Halpin
Age: 16 Sex: Male
9 Ballycaseymore Hill
Shannon Co-Clare,
Ireland
Likes: *X-Men, New Titans, Elementals*

Yamithliz Rivas
Age: 15 Sex: Female
Coop. Jdns. San Ignacio
Edif-A-Apt.-1001
Rio Piedras, PR 00927
Likes: *StormWatch, Star Wars: T. of the J., Robin*

Bruce Luther
Age: 29 Sex: Male
416 E. 9th St. Apt. A
New York, NY 10009
Likes: *Spawn, Marshal Law, Tales of the Beanworld*

Andrew Kim
Age: 7 Sex: Male
14319 Woodline Dr.
Houston, TX 77015
Likes: *Venom, X-Men, X-Force*

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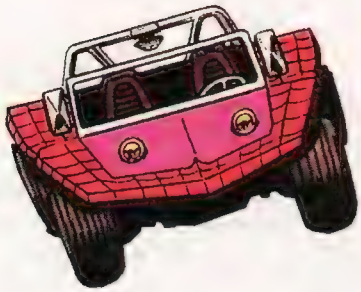

Dear Wizard,

I have a question about Spawn: Why doesn't he drive his Spawn-Mobile in the comics?

Jose Morales
Bronx, NY

Are you kiddin' me? Take my word for it as a comic book child of the '70s. Spider-Man used to drive the Spider-Mobile, and boy, did he look silly.

Dear Wizard,

Now that Todd Toys had done a Medieval Spawn action figure, are we going to see Safari Spawn, Malibu Spawn, or Astronaut Spawn?

Doug Sutherland and
Andy Ryder
Salt Lake City, UT

I doubt it. But personally, I'd like to see a Bridal Spawn, Beach Blanket Summer Fun Spawn, and, of course, Spawn with the Kung Fu Grip.

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Dear Wizard,

I wanted to drop you a line and let you know that I love the "Casting Call" department that you've been running. But I have to say that in issue #42 when you casted John Cusack in the role of Peter Parker for a Spider-Man movie, you were off-base.

You need a more agile actor. I think you need to turn your heads to the World Wrestling Federation and look at Shawn Michaels. If he'd cut his hair, he'd be perfect. He does flips and moves around the ring very well. He has the upper body build and calves just like Spider-Man and he's used to wearing tights.

Earl Woodruff
Eufaula, OK

He has "calves just like Spider-Man"? Who notices Spider-Man's calves? Geez, looks like I've been missing out on the finer points of comics for quite a while now. And it looks like the wrestling people are getting even weirder. Someone alert Mad Dog Vachon.

Wizard,

This is the age of the information super-highway— technology at its peak! So why don't you folks at *Wizard* set up your own off-ramp on the info-highway? A site in the World Wide Web that can be accessed by thousands of comic book aficionados (and just plain curious folks, too) would be pretty darned nifty. DC Comics already has its mitts in America Online, so you wouldn't be alone as an online comic-related publisher. Many in the net-surfing populace are already into comics, as is proven by the fact that there are a lot of cool on-line sites out there devoted to the comic book world. I hope

Spidey Mobile & Spider-Man ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

you folks consider this and make the brave leap forward...the leap into the future!

Christopher N. Lao
New Haven, CT

What are you, a friggin' salesman? The last time someone gave me a "brave leap into the future" line, he was trying to sell me a Volvo.

But, hey—seems like a good idea to us. Those of you who are of the interfacing persuasion can now reach *Wizard Online* through America Online at WizardTGTC. You can now read *Wizard* stuff, download price guide crap, and even (hint, hint) send letters to Magic Words through the ether. Look me up and say, "Hi" while you're there. I'm the good-looking one.

Guys at Wizard,

Something caught my eye in issue #41 that I barely managed to keep contained. I thought, "OK, *Wizard* slipped, but I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. After all, those guys at *Wizard* are getting old and heavily-veined and they're probably a bunch of mouth-breathing Alzheimer's cases anyhow." But then I opened issue #42 and saw it for the second month in a row. Now I'm steamed!

You guys actually gave a price guide value for a COUNTERFEIT comic? Get real! What the hell are you guys using for creamer since the Coffee-Mate ran out? Ground-up erasers? Fairy dust? Or something that props up at least a half-dozen South American economies? Read my lips, boys and girls: Counterfeit=Garbage!

I mean, $40 for a tinfoil *Batman* #497? And you guys even have the nerve to call it #497C! Boy, you really know how to chafe a guy where he shouldn't oughta be chafed!

Now, I know that a comic is worth exactly what someone is willing to pay for it, but don't you think that *Wizard* has a duty to list this #497C with nothing more than a warning rather than an actual price? What's to stop someone (like me!) from making my very own batch of *Batman* #497C? After all, #497C is listed as a counterfeit and my very own #497C would be every bit as genuine as the genuine counterfeit you have listed.

Hey, any chance of getting my special limited-edition versions in your price guide? I'd make a killing at conventions! After all, I have a special "pencil-mark across UPC" copy of *Batman* #192B and I'm working on a limited edition "cat-barf" *Spidey Super Stories* #16B that you might want to include.

K.R. Stark
Point Coquitlam, B.C., Canada

Point taken. The comic in question first appeared in the price guide portion of *Wizard* #31 and was listed as a "Platinum Edition." Very little was known about its existence at first and it took a while to definitively determine if it was legit or not. It was determined that the comic was indeed counterfeit and a "no value" listing was applied to it as of *Wizard* #43.

Dear Wizard,

Could you answer my questions?

1) Will Cerebus ever refer to himself in first person?

2) Who writes your Top Ten, Top Ten Heroes, and Picks From the Wizard's Hat?

3) Do you guys play *Magic: The Gathering* on your lunch break?

4) Do you guys really get to walk around the office buck-naked?

Justin McVicker
Fremont, CA

Sure thing.

1) Probably not. By the way, Cerebus doesn't bother me when he refers to himself in the first person, but doesn't it drive you buggy when real people do it?

2) The tag-team combination of Andrew Kardon and Pat McCallum do both Top Ten lists. Craig Shutt writes the copy for the five "Big" Picks, and Andrew writes the More Picks (to which Pat and Brian Cunningham toss in their own two cents).

3) Sometimes, but it's just the girlie-men that play.

4) Yes, but only on the alternate Fridays where we get free pizza for lunch. Let me tell ya, it's a regular love-in twice a month around here!

Dear Wizard,

Why don't the X-Men just say that they were hit with gamma rays or were bitten by radioactive spiders or whatever? That way they wouldn't be persecuted for simply being mutants.

Greg Kovar
Plymouth, NE

Good question. One thing I've never quite understood is the way John Q. Public reacts to superheroes in the Marvel Universe. Some heroes are a-OK, while others are looked at with a bit of apprehension. But mutants seem to be universally hated. Why such a big difference? I can see Captain America being beloved, seeing as how he's a war hero and symbolic of mom, apple pie, and the girl next door. But why mutants are the object of such hatred is beyond me. I mean, who would you be more scared of—the Thing or Jubilee?

Dear Wizard,

When Jean Grey and Scott Summers went to the future in *The Adventures of Cyclops and Phoenix* mini-series, did they change anything?

Michael Saunders
Bronx, NY

You mean besides their underwear? Now how the bloody hell would I know? How would anyone know? It's in the future, fer cryin' out loud! Wait and see like the rest of us.

Dear Wizard,

My question is why do they continue to print crappy heroic comics that no one likes like *Thor*, *Fantastic Four*, and *Captain America*? I live in Walla Walla, Washington. I know a lot of people who collect comics, and the only one who likes *Thor* or *Captain America* is my 50 year-old dad. He also listens to classical music and reads Plato's *Republic* and Dante's *Inferno* (Plato and Dante are some Greek or Roman freaks). So let's get to the point. Why don't you have a comic where Wolverine, Spawn, Punisher, Deadpool, and Daredevil all team up and beat the living hell out of Thor, the Fantastic Four, and Captain America? Not only would you get rid of a whole lot of stupid-ass freaks, but you could probably make a lot of money. You could even make a mini-series and fit all the cool guys in and get rid of all the freaks. While you're at it, why don't you kick Jean Grey and Cyclops out of the X-Men and have the Punisher replace Professor X. That would be cool.

Jesse Corvino
Walla Walla, WA

Ah, the spokesman for the Beavis and Butt-Head generation is finally heard from. Nothing like a well-presented argument. Just goes to show you, folks, that it takes all kinds.

David Braun Age: 12 Sex: Male 29 Perryfalls Place Baltimore, MD 21236 Likes: *Aliens vs. Predator, ShadowHawk*	Derrick Benitz Age: 13 Sex: Male 11780 Cobblestone Circle Platte City, MO 64079 Likes: *Venom, Pitt, Darker Image*	Michelangelo Retana Age: 14 Sex: Male 3642 W. McLean Chicago, IL 60647 Likes: *Spawn, Savage Dragon, Uncanny X-Men*	Jason Cobb Age: 14 Sex: Male P.O. Box 341 Hillsboro, TN 37342 Likes: *X-Force, Spawn,* any Rob Liefeld title	Apu Azar Age: 20 Sex: Female 1845 O'Brien South Bend, IN 46616 Likes: *What If...?, John Byrne's Next Men, Namor*	Ray Evon Age: 14 Sex: Male 6979 Bobhird Dr. San Diego, CA 92119 Likes: *Lobo, The Maxx, Pitt*	Sean A. Williams Age: 17 Sex: Male 4603 Berkeley Montclair, CA 91763 Likes: *X-Men, Spawn, WildC.A.T.s*	Max A. Figueroa Age: 18 Sex: Male Las Gladiolas 301 Apt. 1408 Hato Rey, PR 00917 Likes: *Eternal Warrior, X-O Manowar, Bloodshot*

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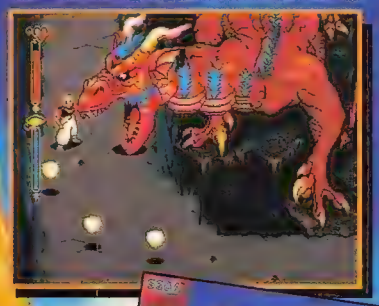

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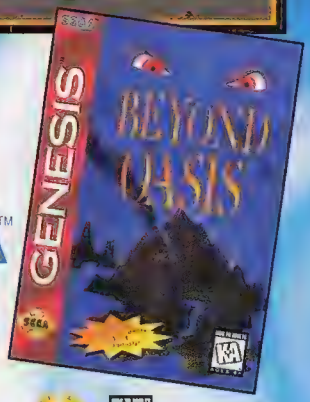

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THE ULTIMATE ADVENTURE AWAITS!

Ask the WIZARD

Q: Since Gambit can charge up non-living stuff, and Spawn is technically dead, could Gambit charge up Spawn?

—S. O'Neil, Tunkhannock, PA

A: *If you check out* Wizard *#35's Magic Words, you'll get the answer on Gambit's powers straight from Fabian Nicieza himself. But quite simply, no.*

Q: If Superman and Flash ran a marathon, who'd win?

—S. Suter, Pasadena, CA

A: *In* Adventures of Superman *#463, the Flash (as Wally West) beat Supes in a huge global race. Now that Wally's some super-speed God, there'd be no contest.*

Q: Why do most comic book characters wear spandex?

—M. Johnson, Marina Del Rey, CA

A: 'Cause they'd look pretty stupid eating the stuff!

Q: Which item is more powerful, Green Lantern's ring or Thanos's Infinity Gauntlet?

—J. Patterson, Steedman, MO

A: *Well, I'd have to give this one to the Gauntlet, seeing as how Hal Jordan needed all the Green Lanterns' rings to wreak havoc in the DC Universe, and Thanos only needed the one glove. Plus, it's got the word infinity in it, and you can't get any bigger than that!*

Ask the Wizard's Wizard

Will Marvel ever put out a good movie?

—K. Osiewicz, East Amherst, NY

Photo: V. Holland. Wake the Wizard ™ & © TechniArt Inc.

Have a question that's bugging the heck out of you and that no one can answer? Heck, the Wizard can answer anything. Just send your stumpers to Ask the Wizard, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

By the way, Jesse, you might try reading the *Inferno* sometime. You may be surprised that Dante's story was the inspiration for *X-Men Annual* #4. You also might want to look into Plato, particularly his *Socratic Dialogues*. They have, after all, stood the test of time a lot better than the Punisher, whose books, I recall, are being canceled.

Dear Wizard,

Did you hear the joke about Vampirella? Aw, forget it—it bites anyway! Get it? Ha! Ha! "It bites!" See, "bites," like she's a vampire, and the joke bites...

Oh, never mind.

Derrick Harcourt
Ft. Stockton, TX

Y'know, it's letters like this that make me want to rent a van and travel cross-country, so I can find these people and beat the crap out of 'em. Maybe I'll just close this month with a mondo Q-and-A letter...

Dear Wizard,

I was hoping that you would answer some questions for me. I was told that this column is the definitive guide for useless facts regarding the comic book industry and anything even remotely related to it. Here is a list that I have compiled during my study breaks.

1) How does Batman keep the bats in the Batcave from dropping guano on his equipment?

2) Who would win in a battle between Guy Gardner and Steve Urkel?

3) What is the name of Blue Falcon's dog sidekick?

4) What does the phrase "word to your mother" mean?

5) What kind of fish is swimming around in Captain Picard's fish tank?

6) How many times does Dorothy need to click her heels to get back home?

7) Is Pat, the character on *Saturday Night Live*, a man or a woman?

8) Which Robin has better detective skills—Dick Grayson, Jason Todd, or Tim Drake?

9) Who is your favorite member of the Legion of Substitute Heroes and what is his power?

10) When playing rugby, is it better to tackle at the knees or at the waist? Or is it better to just pants the guy?

11) Are there any health risks involved in using colored toilet paper?

12) For what comic book did Todd McFarlane do his first artwork?

13) How do Robin and Nightwing keep their masks on their faces?

14) Why is it so difficult to find a pack of Blackjack gum?

15) Does the Swamp Thing smell like swamp gas?

16) Which would burn faster, a copy of *Spawn/Batman* or a copy of *Batman/Spawn*?

17) Do superhero Underoos have any value in the collectors market? If so, what part does condition play?

18) Could you possibly print the lyrics of the song from the old Spider-Man cartoon?

19) Who the heck is DC Comics's the Warlord?

20) How come Captain Picard has an English accent when he supposedly hails from France?

Abraham Navarro
Bloomington, IN

Yow! That's a lot of questions. Well, here we go:

1) Tarps. Big tarps.

2) Guy Gardner. And since we're on the subject, let me point out that you should read up on the laws in your state to see if there is an "Urkel Statute" on the books where you live. In many states it is illegal to call anyone "Urkel" unless, of course, they are Urkel. If you unjustifiably call someone "Urkel" in some states, they are legally allowed to kick your ass.

3) Dyno-Mutt.

4) It means, "I am telling you the truth, my friend."

5) That's a Lion Fish (called Livingstone). It's a tropical salt-water species that's rather delicate and difficult to keep alive.

6) Three. Just like the number of licks you need to get to the center of a Tootsie Roll Tootsie Pop.

Vampirella ™ & © Harris Publications Inc. Vanilla Ice photo courtesy of Everett Collection.

BLOODSHOT

KEVIN VANHOOK

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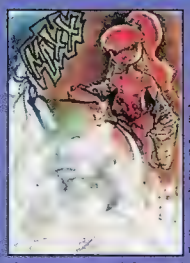

The Maxx & Julie™ & © Sam Kieth

When you drop us a line, show us your drawin' skill! If it's good, we'll print it here, and *boom*, you'll be famous! Just think, as soon as your envelope gets printed, you'll become a household name and you'll start dating the likes of Matt LeBlanc and Courteney Cox (or both, if you like). Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive a *Maxx* #12 signed by Sam Kieth, *X-Force* #38 signed by Fabian Nicieza, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a funky *Wizard* cap! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* an original framed Sam Kieth sketch of the King of the Overbites, the Maxx. Thanks for the dreamy art, Sam! Artists: please include a clearly printed return address on the **back** of your envelope.

Sin™ & © William Elliott Tucci

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Beaumont, TX

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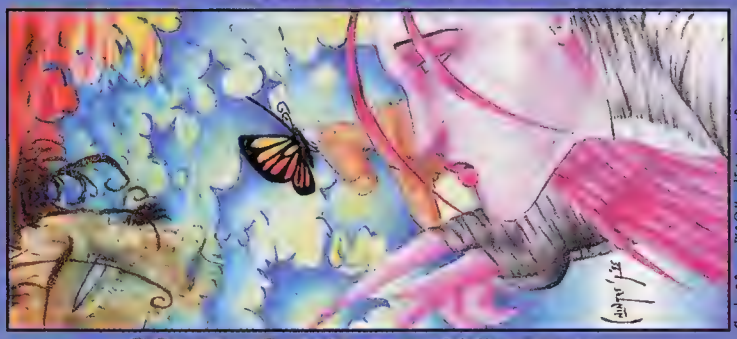
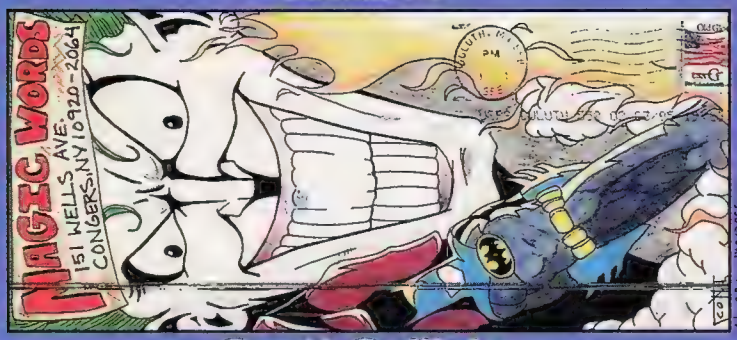
Ernest Hebert
Montreal, Canada



Chamber & Penance™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Mark Anthony Winters
Salina, KS



Joker & Batman™ & © DC Comics

Scott Gullicks
Duluth, MN

7) Yes.

8) Dick Grayson.

9) No doubt about it—Stone Boy! His power is the ability to turn to stone. Only problem is that when he does that, he also becomes completely immobile. He's not much good to the Legion, unless they push him off a cliff onto a bad guy. They actually did that once.

10) Definitely at the waist.

11) Yes, but they are very slight. Provided you are not easily prone to infection or allergic reaction, colored toilet paper should pose you no harm.

12) *Coyote* #11 from Epic Comics.

13) With a gentle adhesive called spirit gum. It's the same stuff that movie and stage actors use to apply masks, fake beards, and other funky stuff.

14) Because the manufacturer, American Chicle Company, only makes one batch a year.

15) Only after a dinner of beans and rice.

16) I don't know, but I think I'll have a lot of fun finding out.

17) Sure they do. And, especially in this case, condition plays a big part. There just ain't a lot of call for well-used Underoos.

18) Sure: "Spider-Man, Spider-Man/Does whatever a spider can/Spins a web any size/Catches thieves just like flies/Look out—here comes the Spider-Man!" That's just the first verse. One hundred *Wizard* style points to whoever can give us all the lyrics to the next three (that's right, three) verses.

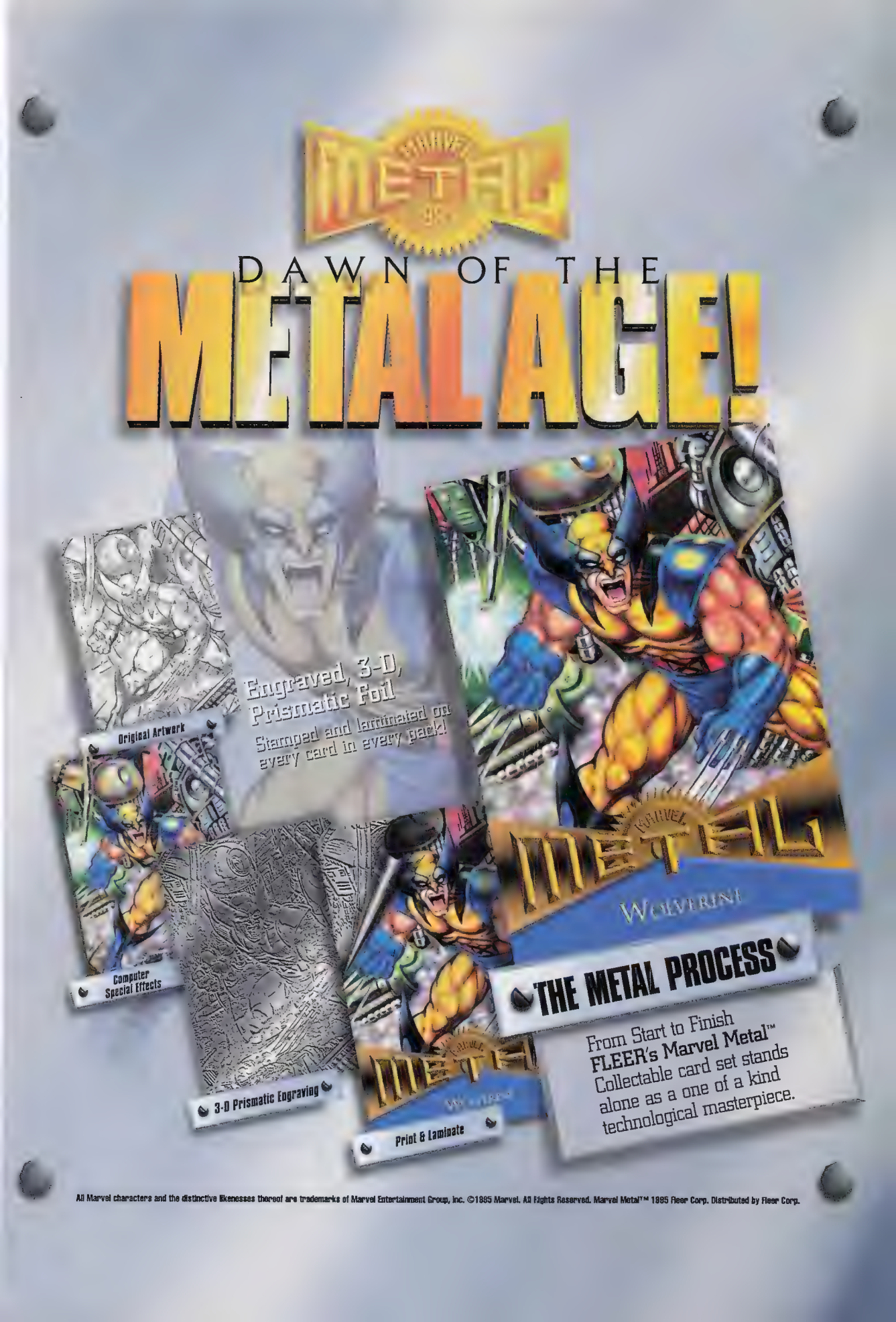
19) The Warlord is Travis Morgan, a U.S. Air Force pilot who was flying over the North Pole when he was disoriented by the curve of the Earth (really!) and wound up flying into the secret "middle earth" land of Skartaris. We think he's still there, even though he popped up in *Green Arrow* a few years back.

20) If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times: You just can't trust the French! I trust 'em only as far as I can bounce 'em, and I am...

Jim McLauchlin, News Editor of Collector's Sportslook *magazine, will eat Styrofoam packing peanuts on a dare.*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Hey, we got tons of mail on the Kubert School article in *Wizard* #44 wanting more info on the school. Well, we aim to please. For more info, write to The Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art at: 37 Myrtle Ave, Dover, NJ 07801.

Send your letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064



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2 Bishop
3 Cyclops
4 Gambit
5 Holocaust
6 Jean Grey
7 Nightcrawler
8 Sunfire
9 Weapon X

Avengers

10 Black Widow
11 Captain America
12 Giant Man
13 Thor
14 Thunderstrike
15 Vision

Cosmic Powers

16 Galactus
17 Nebula
18 Silver Surfer
19 Thanos
20 Tyrant
21 Warlock

Force Works

22 Hawkeye
23 Iron Man
24 Mandarin
25 Scarlet Witch
26 Spider-Woman
27 War Machine

Marvel Universe

28 Daredevil
29 Deathlok
30 Elektra
31 Hulk
32 Human Torch
33 Invisible Woman
34 Mephisto
35 Modok
36 Mr. Fantastic
37 Namor
38 Puppet Master
39 She-Hulk
40 Silver Sable
41 Super Skrull
42 Thing

Marvel 2099

43 Bloodhawk
44 Brimstone Love
45 Doom 2099
46 Ghost Rider 2099
47 Hulk 2099
48 Junkpile
49 Meanstreak
50 Punisher 2099
51 Ravage 2099
52 Skullfire
53 Spider-Man 2099
54 Vendetta
55 Xi'an

Midnight Sons

56 Blade
57 Blaze
58 Dr. Strange
59 Ghost Rider
60 Morbius
61 Strange
62 Vengeance

New Warriors

63 Firestar
64 Justice
65 Kymaera
66 Night Thresher
67 Nova
68 Rage

Punisher

69 Punisher

Spider-Man

70 Black Cat
71 Carnage
72 Dr. Octopus
73 Judas Traveller
74 Rhino
75 Scarlet Spider
76 Scorpion
77 Shocker
78 Spider-Man
79 Stunner
80 Venom
81 Vulture

X-Men

82 Apocalypse
83 Archangel
84 Banshee
85 Beast
86 Bishop
87 Boomer
88 Cable
89 Chamber
90 Colossus
91 Cyclops
92 Deadpool
93 Domino
94 Gambit
95 Husk
96 Iceman
97 Jean Grey
98 Jubilee
99 Juggernaut
100 Lady Deathstrike
101 Legion
102 Longshot
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106 Mr. Sinister
107 Mystique
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110 Phoenix
111 Professor X
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113 Random
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115 Sabretooth
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117 Shadowcat
118 Skin
119 Storm
120 Strong Guy
121 Stryfe
122 Synch
123 Warpath
124 White Queen
125 Wolverine

Alternate M

126 Beast
127 Cable
128 Dr. Doom
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130 Iron Man
131 Kraven
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138 Checklist

Blasters

Gold		Silver
MB1	Cable	GB1
MB2	Captain America	GB2
MB3	Cyclops	GB3
MB4	Gambit	GB4
MB5	Hulk	GB5
MB6	Human Torch	GB6
MB7	Iron Man	GB7
MB8	Jean Grey	GB8
MB9	Punisher	GB9
MB10	Rogue	GB10
MB11	Silver Surfer	GB11
MB12	Spider-Man	GB12
MB13	Storm	GB13
MB14	Thing	GB14
MB15	Thor	GB15
MB16	Venom	GB16
MB17	War Machine	GB17
MB18	Wolverine	GB18

Preliminary checklist. Final card numbering sequences, character selections and category designations subject to change prior to card release.

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Flair Marvel Universe

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Marvel Cards Universe

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Marvel Masterpieces 1994

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'95 Fleer Ultra X-Men

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Top Trading Cards

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#1 Apr 1994
Amazing Spider-Man

#1 May 1994
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Thanks Again For A Great 1994!

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WIZARD NEWS
Compiled by Patrick Daniel O'Neill

MARVEL and HEROES WORLD: The Shakedown

Photo: J. Schuyler

Terry Stewart

Frank Miller

When **Marvel Entertainment Group** announced in March its plan to distribute Marvel and Malibu comics to the direct market exclusively through its recently acquired **Heroes World Distribution Company**, it was either "declar[ing] war on the free market" or "propel[ling] comic retailing in[to] the future," depending on whether you believe writer/artist **Frank Miller** or former Marvel Comics president **Terry Stewart**.

What *was* certain was the fact that comic distribution would never be the same.

To many industry insiders, ever since Marvel acquired Heroes World—a medium-size distribution company based in New Jersey—in December 1994, going to exclusive distribution was inevitable. Effective July 1, Heroes World will become the exclusive distributor for Marvel and Malibu Comics. Heroes World will also cease selling all other comic lines.

Reaction to the announcement has been varied, ranging from skepticism to paranoia to outright panic. Speculation on how other publishers and distributors would react has been plentiful. Chief among those rumors was that **DC Comics**, Marvel's closest rival, would respond in kind by aligning with its own exclusive distributor. As of press time, that has yet to occur.

Some doomsayers predict the end of the direct market in its current format and even conservative analysts predict many comic shops will close up as a result.

But what does the Marvel/Heroes World announcement mean to other players—publishers, distributors, and retailers—and ultimately, you the comic buyer and reader? Based on what has already occurred, who are the winners and losers in this newly-renovated marketplace?

WINNERS

• **Marvel**. By going to exclusive distribution, Marvel eliminates the middleman (i.e., an outside distributor), thus pocketing a quick 5 percent (more or less) additional profit, which makes the bottom line heavier, the stockholders happier, and the company's credit rating healthier. In addition, by flexing its muscles, Marvel reminds people that it is—despite any recent downturns in market share or perceived product quality—still the industry leader. Marvel acts; everyone else reacts. In addition, Marvel will once again have all the top spots on its distributor's Hot List again, something that hasn't happened in a long time.

• **The newsstand market**, which remains unaffected by all this. If you get your comics at your local convenience store, you won't notice any changes.

• **Larger mail order companies**, whose greater buying power enables them to get the best possible discounts, will still be there when local stores have gone belly up. These mail order houses will undoubtedly pick up new customers.

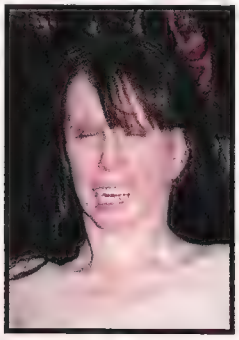
• **Heroes World**, taken from relative obscurity as a small, northeastern distributor—and in short order was pushed into the limelight and turned into a major nationwide entity—could possibly be the second largest North American distributor by year's end.

LOSERS

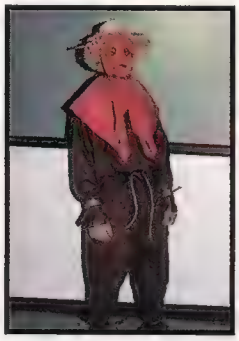
• **DC** had an opportunity to take its rightful place in the forefront of the opposition forces, but as of three weeks after the Marvel announcement has not yet taken a public stand. A rumored deal with **Diamond**, the largest North American comics distributor, did not materialize and sources indicate that DC and Diamond are getting farther away from reaching a deal, rather than closer. Ultimately, this lack of action may prove to have been the smartest move, but some will undoubtedly see

Continued on page 22

New Marvel CEO announced. "I just flew in to New York, and boy, is my head tired! But seriously, folks..." said bearded dweeb.



Original '70s Vampirella model hits the skids. "Boy, am I scabby!" declared crusty freak.



DC villain suffers from case of Hershey-squirts. "I wanna go home," stated stained Bat-villain.

Continued from page 21

this as a sign of indecision or weakness.

• **The direct market**, which probably includes the store where this issue of *Wizard* was bought. Most comic retailers have a fairly narrow profit margin, and the price they pay their distributor depends largely on how much they spend. The bigger their order, the better their discount, and many stores do all their business with one distributor to maximize the discount. Now they'll have to split their comics orders between two sources, assuming they wish to continue selling Marvel comics (or, conversely, wish to sell anything besides Marvel comics). Splitting the order reduces the size of each order, thus lowering the discount. Many stores will no longer be profitable and will probably shut down. Larger stores and chains will not be hit as hard, but run other risks. For example, Marvel Comics's new president, **Jerry Calabrese**, was involved in the Marvel Mart plans of years past, and will now have direct information as to what areas do the best business selling Marvel comics. If Marvel-owned retail stores are still considered a viable option by MEG management, this information would be worth its weight in adamantium.

• **Small press and independent publishers**, who in the past enjoyed a good relationship with Heroes World, and are now concerned that they might get squeezed out by the changing marketplace as being unprofitable or not worth the effort. So it might be tougher for you to get your hands on your favorite copy of ***Bone***, ***Shi***, ***Cerebus***, or ***Tyrant***. Some independent publishers like Fantagraphics and Joe Monks's C.F.D. Productions have announced their intention to explore the formation of alternative distribution networks as a reaction to market uncertainty.

• **Other distributors, like Diamond and Capital City**—who just lost about 30 percent of their business—now have to figure out the best way to replace that lost income. Diamond did take the moral high ground and announced in a press release that they would maintain "open access to the marketplace" by continuing to offer retailers and consumers "high quality products from the widest range of suppliers." Capital City, on the other hand, reacted to the Marvel/Heroes World announcement in a time-honored American fashion—it immediately brought suit in Federal Court under Wisconsin's Fair Trade Laws, in an attempt to block termination of their arrangement with Marvel. That suit was settled in a number of days, and though the terms of the settlement are confidential, Capital's President **Milton Griepp** did state, "We're happy with the settlement because we feel it will help secure Capital's future." This usually means that a lot of money changed hands.

• **Comics readers**. You've weathered umpteen mega-crossovers, variant covers, a multitude of new universes, late and canceled books, and cover price increases that outpace the national inflation rate like a greyhound outruns a Pekinese...and now this. Odds are, in the none-too-distant future, there will be fewer books to choose from in your local store (assuming that your local comics shop is still around), some books you once looked forward to will no longer be carried, and if you got a discount it's probably a fond memory. As Dark Horse President and founder **Mike Richardson** commented, "One can only hope that these changes will not devastate a market that has served our industry well."

—Paul J. Grant

DC Villains Get BADDER

"We've spent a lot of time in the past few years pumping up the heroes in the DC Universe," said writer **Mark Waid**. "Now it's time we turned our attention to the villains and made them more than equal."

Waid intends to do just that this fall in ***Underworld***, a mini-series consisting of three 48-page issues that crosses over into upwards of a dozen ongoing DC titles. The issues are scheduled to ship September 5, October 3, and October 31. **Howard Porter** (*The Ray*) pencils the series, **Dan Green** (*Uncanny X-Men*) inks it, and **Brian Augustyn** (*Flash*) edits it.

Darkseid gets even meaner in this summer's Underworld *mini-series by DC.*

The story focuses on **Neron**, a demonic force returning to Earth to capture souls after an eons-long banishment. His strategy is two-fold: First, gather second-string DC villains and augment their powers "to make them true villains for the '90s," Waid said. Then, after they've worn down the heroes, Neron will swoop in and offer these champions their own heart's desire in exchange for their souls. "Unexpectedly," Waid hints, "some will."

Neron will be aided by an inner council of villains that includes **Lex Luthor**, the **Joker**, **Dr. Polaris**, **Circe**, and **Abra Kadabra**. "The point-of-view character is the **Trickster**, who is eager to get out of his penny-ante rut and stop being a third-stringer," Waid explained. "But he quickly realizes he's in way over his head." **Blue Devil** will also play a pivotal role—but Waid won't say whose side he ends up on.

The mini-series intersects with many DC comics, with participation left to each title's creative team. "Readers won't have to read any other titles to understand *Underworld*, and they won't have to read *Underworld* to keep up with the titles they read," Waid promised. "But we're hoping they'll be so entranced by, say, the new Killer Frost that they'll want to see what she does in *Superboy*."

The villains won't fight their traditional foils, he notes. "We want them to face heroes they haven't faced before." That leads to such confrontations as **Impulse** tangling with Blockbuster, while **Robin** battles everyone's favorite Silver-Age talking gorilla. "[*Robin* writer] **Chuck Dixon** wanted to use **Gorilla Grodd**, and we said, go for it."

Key villains—such as **Darkseid** and the loonies at Arkham Asylum—may be tied in via one-shot issues that accompany the mini-series, explaining how Neron keeps them out of the fray, Waid added. But such plans were still in the works at press time.

—Craig Shutt

Ooops

In *Wizard* #44, we spelled former Marvel editor Tim Tuohy's name wrong, and referred to him as an assistant editor, when, in fact, he was an associate editor. Sorry, Tim.

In *Wizard* #45's Top Ten Funny Comics list, we listed Keith Giffen as the sole writer of the *Ambush Bug* mini-series, and inadvertently left off Robert Loren Fleming as co-writer. Our most sincere apologies, Robert.

Darkseid ™ & © DC Comics

MARVEL to Acquire SKYBOX

In the midst of all the attention given to Marvel's announced exclusive distribution through **Heroes World**, the company continued its acquisitive ways by announcing a plan to purchase all the outstanding shares of **SkyBox International, Inc.**, the trading card manufacturer. The deal would total about $150 million, or $16 a share.

Marvel, of course, already owns the **Fleer** card company, and industry speculation is that SkyBox will be merged with that business.

SkyBox is currently the license holder for trading cards based on **DC Comics** characters. DC Comics had no comment on the acquisition, but is said to already be looking for a new trading card partner.

Stock market analysts are calling the acquisition a good move for Marvel. "The acquisition of SkyBox is a good strategic move because it certainly eliminates competition in the collectible trading card business and adds to Marvel's market position," said Alexander Paris Jr, who tracks the company for Barrington Research Associates.

"It offers a strengthening of Marvel's position in the trading card business provided they are able to carry over key licenses that they need, one of them being DC Comics," said Smith Barney's Jill S. Krutick. "It would not be shocking if there were some changes in licensing down the road or if some of the deals were renegotiated," Krutick said.

It was also widely rumored that Marvel had acquired **Bongo Comics**, cartoonist Matt Groening's company that publishes ***Simpsons Comics*** and Simpsons-related titles. According to Bongo editor **Jason Grode**, that rumor was apparently kicked off by the appearance of Simpsons art in Marvel's latest batch of co-op ad slicks for retailers. Grode said the art is part of Bongo's deal with Marvel, under which Marvel handles Bongo's co-op advertising. He also said that Bongo is negotiating a distribution arrangement with Marvel, similar to the one Bongo had with Welsh Publishing, prior to that firm's acquisition by Marvel last year. Grode stressed, however, that such a deal would not make Bongo exclusive to Heroes World and that it would continue to be carried by other distributors as well.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

STRANGE Doings

It's time to bring back the strange, and new series writer **Warren Ellis** hopes to do that, beginning with ***Dr. Strange*** #80 in June.

From his Essex, England home, Ellis said Dr. Strange is one of Marvel's better-established characters who has gotten lost in a shuffle of writers. Ellis's Dr. Strange incorporates more use and abuse of magic, as well as magic being used for things nobody has ever dreamed of.

"I think Dr. Strange has gotten away from what he was supposed to be," Ellis said. "He's the Sorcerer Supreme. He shouldn't be fighting supervillains.

"He's the man you go to with macabre problems. He's the guy children whisper about. He's a shaman. You don't necessarily like him, but feel more comfortable knowing he's there. I'm going for smaller, bolder stories, bordering on the scary."

Ellis will avoid "big events" and multi-book crossovers. The only connection Ellis's *Dr. Strange* will have to other books occurs in the fourth and final issue of his "out there" mini-series, ***Druid***.

Writer Warren Ellis will be bringing more macabre to Dr. Strange this June.

"It's a culmination of all the occult books I've written. Daemon Hellstrom will celebrate the single-most disgusting thing he's ever done, and he invites all Marvel's mystic characters to a dinner party," Ellis explained.

"Upon arriving, they discover—something—in the middle of the dinner table."

The ramifications of this party will be immediate, and limited to the pages of *Dr. Strange*, as Ellis tries to keep things tight.

"This is not another ongoing revamp," he stressed. "Once you read #80, that's the status quo. The last run was a 15-month revamp. I don't want to strain anyone's patience anymore than it already has been."

Ellis said he will follow predecessor **David Quinn**'s lead in the status of the core supporting characters. "David sent **Clea** off with one of the fake Dr. Stranges and she's left the book," Ellis explained. "I have no intention of bringing her back. **Wong** will still be around, but he won't be the nicey-nicey servant he's been in the past."

Ellis has no intention of getting "too retro" with *Dr. Strange*, but instead plans to move the book forward, by reviving much of the past. He said he inherited a lot of baggage from previous writers, much of which he said was cleaned up by Quinn.

"I've always pictured Dr. Strange as a fairly well-developed personality," Ellis said. "But that's been lost somewhere along the way. He's basically been inactive for three years, and someone's changed the whole game while he was away."

Ellis's Dr. Strange, however, will simply force the game to adapt to his rules.

—Gary St. Lawrence

Dr. Strange ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Comics for Charity

Dylan Vogel

Hundreds of people were on hand at the King Con '95 in Albany, N.Y. to bring hope to three-year-old Dylan Vogel, who is currently suffering severe intestinal problems due to grievous injuries inflicted last October by two dogs. Russ and Maryellen Chamberlain, owners of MRC Comics, decided to hold an auction at their store's annual King Con, to raise money for the intestinal transplant the boy desperately needs. Many organizations, from comic publishers to insurance companies, donated items for the auction. As of press time, Dylan, while conscious, had been hooked up to a feeding machine, and the amount of money raised by the auction was unavailable. Monetary donations can still be sent to the Dylan Fund, c/o Trust Department, OnBank & Trust, 80 State St., Albany, NY 12207.

—John B. Lacey

BYRNE does Wonder Woman

In his second opportunity to redefine a classic DC character (and *her* third remake of sorts in a decade), **John Byrne** takes over as the writing and artistic hand behind ***Wonder Woman*** with issue #101, shipping in July.

"I always liked Wonder Woman, but nobody's ever asked me before," Byrne told *Wizard*. "**Paul Kupperberg** is the editor, he's also a close friend. He called me up and said, 'How'd you like to do *Wonder Woman*?' I said, 'Sure.' That simple."

Since the previous team of **William Messner-Loebs** and **Mike Deodato** are closing *Wonder Woman* #100 with all the loose ends tied up, Byrne is pretty free to take the series in any direction he chooses. Taking Horace Greeley's advice to heart, his choice is to go west. He'll be sending the Amazon to the previously unseen town of Gateway City, on the west of the DC Universe America. "I'm looking upon it as a really cheesy, sleazy San Francisco," Byrne said. "San Francisco is already a very kind of funky-looking city—mostly clean and bright, but it has that sort of unique look that only San Francisco has. If you take that and decay it a bit, you get a really fascinating environment against which to put this very sleek, clean, sparkling character."

Byrne is no stranger to big, strong, beautiful women, having previously handled the adventures of Marvel's **She-Hulk** and his own **Babe** for his Legend imprint published by Dark Horse Comics. But he promises his version of Princess Diana will not look like the other two. "I'm quite happy with what's happening so far—not just the face, but the whole physique on Wonder Woman," he said, "trying to find something that is simultaneously long and lean but also strong; trying to avoid some of the riffs I did with She-Hulk, and still achieve the same effect of a powerful woman."

As for opponents, Byrne is turning to his tried-and-true concept—resurrect the lame and make them strong: "The first thing I said to Paul Kupperberg was, 'Go forth and see how many editors would be willing to give us villains. See if they've got any villains lying around who are, perhaps, lame villains with really neat names or anything like that.'"

Byrne promises to stick with the Amazon for at least 12 issues, a year of adventures that may include visits from someone Byrne knows well, **Superman**, and one of his top-drawer villains.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

Wonder Woman™ & © DC Comics

Wonder Woman gets beefed up, courtesy of John Byrne.

COMPANY UPDATES

ACCLAIM COMICS
Wizard would like to congratulate Paul Fairchild on his promotion to Director of Marketing. Good goin', Paul!

AC COMICS
FEMForce #84 marks "The Death of Joan Wayne" (a.k.a. Ms. Victory), in the story of the final passage of the heroine who is the heart of FEMForce. Tara, She-Cat, and Paragon must find a way to go on after their loss. And will Rad, Joan's daughter, be turned away from her evil ways because of this?...Also, straight from the pages of *FEMForce*, watch as *Crimebuster* #0 launches the hero into his own series, as he battles Iron Jaw, the man with the mouth of steel.

AMARA COMICS
Hey, remember the comic company ANIA? Well, if you liked their stuff, then check out Amara Comics, a new company formed by Roosevelt Pitt, Jr., a former co-founder of ANIA. Coming out in July is a 16-page full-color preview of *Purge*—a former ANIA title—for $1.50. Following that is a preview of *Powerknights*—a group of people who can tap into their own biochemistry and form invulnerable armor over their bodies—in August, and a preview of *Random5*—a futuristic team of five African-American female mercenaries—in September. All three previews will include a card that readers can use to vote for which title they'd like to see come out first....And for those who are curious, Amara is Swahili for courage and pride.

ARCHIE
Cheryl Blossom is getting her own three-issue mini-series, starting in June! Learn all about Riverdale's racy redhead in this story, which includes her becoming a lifeguard and the first meeting between Archie and her family!

AUGUST HOUSE
Foodang #4, shipping in May, has a cover by Michael Duggan with inks by George Pérez.

BLACKOUT COMICS
Blackout has added John Platt, an award-winning horror and magazine writer, and William Marden, a published novelist and journalist, to its roster of creativity....*The Death of Lady Vampré* will be the first in the series of horror titles that Blackout is launching, starting in August. Creating the flip-cover for this imprint will be Mike Mignola (*Hellboy*) and Gene Colan (Marvel's *Tomb of Dracula*).

BONGO COMICS
Bartman returns! May's *Bartman* #4 begins a three-part story, in which the Violet Avenger faces off against one of the most terrifying foes imaginable: negative public opinion! After Bartman deals with ridiculous media accusations in #4, he dons his cape 'n' cowl for the last time in June's #5, to save his sidekick Houseboy (a.k.a. Milhouse)—and then falls, defeated! Who can take over for the heroic duo?

CALIBER PRESS
Take note, Oz lovers: June is OZ MONTH! Caliber will be heralding this occasion with several books and products, including: Oz #9, in which the Oz Freedom Fighters, after being driven out of the Emerald City, go up against Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, and Lion! Then there's the first Oz Graphic Novel, a black-and-white, 176-page, squarebound book which collects the first five issues of the Oz title. Meet Kevin Ross, Mary Ross, and Peter Stevens, as they're transported to Oz, right in the middle of the war between the Freedom Fighters and the malicious Nome King! The book, which includes a bonus sketchbook section featuring artist Bill Bryan's work, will cost $14.95. Both the comic and GN are written by Ralph Griffith and Stuart Kerr, and drawn by Bryan.

CARTOON BOOKS
Late summer will see the release of Volume 3 of *The Complete Bone Adventures* TPB, which reprints *Bone* #13-#18 and completes the first part of the trilogy. Creator Jeff Smith points out that the final volume of *The Complete Bone Adventures* will ship in July of 2001. So, all you fans dying to see how this great adventure ends will just have to wait another six years....Also

Continued on page 26

WONDER WOMAN

100 CENTENNIAL EDITION

FALL OF AN AMAZON

SOARING BEYOND!

COMING IN MAY

MESSNER-LOEBS and DEODATO JR.

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Activists Get De-Activated

A non-violent comic book? Sort of a contradiction in terms, no? Well, the **Fellowship of Reconciliation** didn't think so. So they entered into an agreement with **Joyce Brabner** (writer of *Our Cancer Year*), **Mark Badger** (artist of *The Mask*), and **Wayne Van Sant** (artist of Marvel's *The 'Nam*) to create ***Activists***—a one-shot anthology on activism intended to "educate readers about non-violent protest." Little did they imagine that their book wouldn't be "politically correct" enough.

"There was immediate negative feedback from members of our own constituency," said **Jo Becker**, executive director of the non-profit "peace and justice" organization. "Quite a number of African Americans who saw the book were unhappy with its depiction of African Americans." After some heated debate, FOR worked out an agreement with its publisher, **Stabur**, to hold back distribution. "It was our choice," said Becker.

Understandably, Brabner and friends were left shaken and angry. "They won't let the kids have the books," said Brabner. "They won't let anybody look at it, but word of mouth is going around that we did something tasteless and racist. If you're somebody who doesn't read comics, who is sensitive to racist issues, and you hear that white artists and writers were doing these, you're going to start imagining things, like [African-Americans] with bones in their noses."

So what's a writer to do?

"We signed away the book as a comic book, but nothing in our contract said anything about electronic rights," said Brabner. "So we're posting this all over the Internet, CompuServe, etc. We're giving everybody on the planet permission to copy it and re-copy it. The press is going to see how three censored artists made an end-run around censorship by using another medium."

As for **Gary Reed**, publisher of Caliber/Stabur Press, "The whole thing is ludicrous," he said. "The book should be out there, but it's their book. We're living in a politically correct society. All of America is being bullied."

—Clifford Meth

'Lost' Superman Adventure Back in Print

The very first prose story about Superman, not seen in an authorized edition since 1942, has been reissued by **Applewood Books**, a publisher that specializes in putting such "lost treasures" of American pop culture back into print.

Wizard readers will remember *The Adventures of Superman* by **George Lowther** from the coverage we gave it in our 1993 *Superman Special Edition*.

The book features black-and-white drawings and full-color paintings by **Joe Shuster** and his studio. Lowther's novel tells the origin of the Man of Steel in more detail than had ever been seen in the comics at the time, and pits the adult champion of Metropolis against Nazi saboteurs.

Lowther was one of the primary writers for the radio version of Superman and many of the details he included in his novel, such as the names of Superman's parents and foster parents, would carry over to the radio serial and the TV series starring George Reeves.

The Adventures of Superman is available now in bookstores and comics shops at a list price of $17.95.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

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shipping this summer will be a repackaged edition of the first volume of *The Complete Bone Adventures* in hardcover.

CHAOS! COMICS

"Lady Death as you know her will be a memory," says Lady D. creator-writer Brian Pulido of the tumultuous events within June's *Lady Death: Between Heaven and Hell* #4, the mini-series closer. She will become the voracious servant of Lucifer, he says, knowing fans of Ms. Death will be shocked by this fact, since this is the complete opposite of the Lady's goals. Purgatori also plays a major part in this ish....Meanwhile, Chaos! readers can expect a fun time in July, when Evil Ernie takes on—and totally rips apart—a barrage of archetypal heroes in the violent *Evil Ernie vs. the Superheroes*....And here's a preview of the extra-snazzy Lady Death statue, produced by master sculptor Clayburn Moore, with an August release date. This beautiful piece will run you only $175—save up now!

CLAYPOOL COMICS

Kurt Busiek (*Marvels*) contributes to a hilarious parody of *Batman: The Animated Series* in June's *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark* #26. "Lights, Camera...Action Figures!" will be the first full-length story in the title's run (which has previously offered issues with two stories), and has the voluptuous vixen voicing a Catwoman-type character on a show called *Flederman: The Re-Animated Series*. Things get out of control when the animated villains spring to life!

Lady Death™ & © Brian Pulido

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

The CBLDF, a non-profit organization which funds the legal support of comic book retailers battling for their rights in court, recently garnered almost $12,000 at February's Great Eastern Convention in New York City—and it only took a few hours. On the afternoon of February 25, Scott Dunbier held his fourth New York Art Auction in five years, in which con attendees bid on over 70 pieces of comic-related art donated by 56 artists. Star auctioneers Andy Helfer and Jimmy Palmiotti, along with Dunbier, brought in bids from $1,300 for an original Daredevil cover by Frank Miller, to $550 for a Jerry Ordway Shazam! pin-up. Also, convention goers bought a slew of T-shirts, prints, buttons, and the like at the anti-censorship organization's booth that weekend, bringing in another $2,842. Congrats to the Defense Fund!

CRUSADE COMICS

July brings followers of *Shi* something extra-special: *Shi: Senryaku*, a three-issue mini-series. Each issue will be a compilation of double-page interpretations of Bill Tucci's hot heroine, by an army of artists like Jim Lee (*WildC.A.T.s*), Joe Quesada (*Ash*), Dave Sim (*Cerebus*), and Geof Darrow (*Hard Boiled*)—plus Tucci himself, of course. The series will depict the Japanese martial classic, *The Thirty-Six Strategies*. Each illustration will show Shi portraying each of these Strategies, which the warrior utilizes in her battle against the Yakuza. Tucci promises that it will contain a sizable amount of text on these battle strategies, and will truly help its readers get to know Shi even better. The mini-series will debut at July's Chicago Comic Con, and part of its proceeds will be used to help pay the medical expenses of Vito Carlucci, a friend of Tucci's who has Multiple Sclerosis....For *Shi* fans who need to know when the next quality-filled issue comes out, here's a shipping schedule for the next two: #6 ships May 2nd and #7 ships June 6th.

GIFFEN goes Robot Fighting

Keith Giffen (*Legion of Super-Heroes, Agents of Law*) takes over the writing helm of ***Magnus: Robot Fighter*** with issue #55 this June. "I'm going to strip Magnus down to his raw nerves and then take the book in a different direction kicking and screaming," said the writer. "I'm not going to ignore continuity, but embrace it, build on what [previous series writer] **Tony Bedard** did already in Valiant's future timeline.

"A fellow by the name of **Grey** (Defiant's *The Good Guys*) is helping by redesigning the look of the world, changing it from a Krypton-clone into something distinctly different and unique."

Editor **Teresa Nielsen Hayden** added, "We need this to be a book that is more distinctly science fiction, something where the reader will pay attention to the background and get a sense of place. If that disappears, it's not science fiction, it's people in funny clothes. Keith has a real sense for science fiction and knows how it works; artists **Kevin Kobasic**, Grey, and **Anibel Rodriguez** are all helping display that."

Magnus™ & © Western Publishing Co., Inc.

Kieth Giffen will be handling the writing chores of Magnus: Robot Fighter.

Plans for the book include the return of the metal dragon that Japan became, revelations about the agenda of the Psi-Lords, and a big surprise for fans this June when the status of one of the major characters changes dramatically.

Giffen is also writing and drawing Valiant's ***Punx*** , a series of mini-series due out in July, that he described as, "A white-hot roller coaster ride with no seat belts or safety bar and somebody who hates you at the controls." *Punx* is linked in some ways to ***Harbinger***, but has Giffen's unique sense of humor stamped onto it. "It's four-color crack," chuckled Giffen. "I want people to read this book and have it be the ultimate head trip—then come back for more. Each issue for the first year will introduce a new major character, one that actually has a purpose to the story."

—Greg McElhatton

DARK HORSE COMICS

Shipping in July is *Star Wars: X-Wing* #1, which starts an ongoing written by Mike Baron, which is about the Alliance's elite space aces, prominently featuring the movie character, Wedge Antilles. It takes place between the destruction of the two Death Star stations....Also in July is the two-issue *Grendel Classics*, reprinting issues #16 and #17, from the 1986-91 Comico *Grendel* series....The Shadow faces off against Doc Savage in July in a two-issue special....*Martha Washington Saves the World*, by Frank Miller and Dave Gibbons, begins the third book of the ongoing saga in October....Renowned underground artist Richard Corben is painting the covers to the *Aliens vs. Predator: War* mini-series starting in May....Bryan Talbot's *The Tale of One Bad Rat* mini will be collected into a trade paperback in October....And don't forget the gala celebration of *Dark Horse Presents* #100 in August, which contains a 14-page Concrete tale that follows up the very first Concrete story from *DHP* #1....Terry Laban's *Cud Comics* is moving to Dark Horse in the fall, on a bi-monthly schedule.

DARK MOON PRODUCTIONS

Three new titles will grace the stands from Dark Moon this summer. *Divine Madness*, due in May, is the story of Kinuni, a mysterious and mystical Native American warrior. In #1, he meets his first challenge, a murderer who calls himself Picasso, using human flesh as his canvas. *Rare Breed*, due in July, starring a band of outlaw superhumans put together by Frank Hobbs, a rogue CIA Agent himself, to fight to save the world from the evil whose sole purpose is to wreak havoc. August's *Psalm* stars a woman with no memory of her past, but endowed with power beyond imagination. Travel with her as she traverses worlds, seeking to understand herself.

DC COMICS

Gearing up for *Detective Comics* #700 in early 1996, there's plenty of Bat-stuff in the works. Late summer's *Batman: Vengeance of Bane II* marks the return of the man who broke Batman's back in the "Knightfall" storyline of 1993, as the two spar again for the first time since then. Also, the eagerly awaited Elseworlds tale, *Batman: Man-Bat* by Jamie Delano and John Bolton, is slated to ship in late '95. *The Batman Adventures* ends with #36 in August to become *The Adventures of Batman and Robin* #1 in September, to be written by award-winning writer Paul Dini, with art by Ty Templeton....Artist Mike Wieringo (*Flash*) begins his run as *Robin*'s penciler with #19 in June....This summer, Superman is tried and convicted by an intergalactic court for the destruction of Krypton this summer. His sentence is to be imprisoned at the heart of the nebula that was once Krypton!...Kieron Dwyer joins the *Action Comics* team as penciler in June's #712, and Ron Frenz joins the *Superman* team as penciler in the fall....This summer, prepare as Superboy meets up with the Legion of Super-Heroes again, for the *first* time! Will he become a member?...After 17 years with the super-team, writer Marv Wolfman is retiring from *New Titans* with #130, the title's last issue. *Titans* will relaunch later, possibly under the helm of Dan Jurgens (who says he's interested in writing and drawing it). Sources at DC say there might be a brand-new team, possibly with Nightwing as the leader.

ENTITY COMICS

Now you can have fun reading comics and playing video games at the same time, thanks to Entity Comics and Epic Megagames! *Nira X: Cyberangel* #4 comes polybagged with a 3.5-inch floppy disk containing *Highway Hunter*—a fast and furious arcade-style shoot 'em up game. *Harriers* #1 comes polybagged with the game *Overkill*, in which you control a space ship bent on getting revenge for the destruction of your homeworld. Both issues will be available in June for just $6.95 apiece.

EVENT COMICS

Ash #4 will feature a double-page pin-up of everybody's favorite fire-fightin' superhero by *WildC.A.T.s* artist Jim Lee. In exchange, *Ash* artist Joe Quesada will contribute a double-page pinup of Zealot in *WildC.A.T.s* #21. But what's even cooler, is that both pieces fit together to make one awesome piece of artwork! Both books ship this June....*Ash* #4 ends with a major cliffhanger that reveals exactly what Ashley is deep down inside.

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Shipping in June is *Big Mouth* #5, by Pat Moriarity, which tells a load o' tales about Robert Crumb, Jim Woodring, and even Moriarity himself. And hey, it's for you mature readers.

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Charles Sheffield: Tekno's Mr. Spock

Dr. Charles Sheffield owes his job to Mr. Spock. Sheffield is Tekno•Comix's "scientific adviser," a position that no other comic company can boast.

But then, no other comic company puts out books created by **Leonard Nimoy** (who portrayed *Star Trek*'s science officer, Mr. Spock). "Nimoy felt," said Sheffield, "that if he was going to be involved in a comic book, he didn't want it to be wrong."

While researching for a film project, Nimoy witnessed how the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence program uses radio telescopes to listen for signals from...out there. He then came up with the idea for *Leonard Nimoy's* ***Primortals***, published monthly by **Tekno•Comix**.

"Leonard didn't want his comic book to be filled with nonsense," explained Sheffield. "He didn't want his story to go against everything commonly believed about science. He didn't want people writing in and complaining.

"I don't know who suggested my name," said the mathematician and physicist, "but I write a lot of both science fiction and science fact. I can look at the comic books and sympathize with the plot line, yet make sure that the science fact is reasonable.

"I do this all the time myself, so it seemed reasonable to do it for the comic book series."

Sheffield is Chief Scientist for the Earth Satellite Corporation, past-President of the American Astronautical Society, and a distinguished lecturer for the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. He has also published 27 books, 90 scientific technical papers, and more than 90 short stories. One, "Georgia on my Mind," won the 1994 Nebula and Hugo Awards for best SF novelette.

"I keep my hands off the plotline," said Sheffield of his work for Tekno•Comix. "I just offer [changes] that make the science OK. Comic books aren't written for the science. People read comic books for the excitement, for the story. Science is incidental.

"Comic books don't have to be 'accurate.' They are allowed to have science and scientific knowledge that we don't have yet. But they shouldn't contradict what we believe to be true."

—Ruth Morrison

Photo courtesy of Tekno•Comix

Dr. Charles Sheffield is Tekno•Comix's resident scientific adviser

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FOUR COLOR IMAGES GALLERY
Starting April 24 is a showing of sequential page art from such artists as Adam Kubert, Jim Calafiore, Matt Wagner, Moebius, and more. For more info, call FCI at (212) 431-4234.

HAMILTON COMICS
For those of you who missed the first *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* series, all six issues will be collected in a trade paperback, which comes with a special photo cover featuring the popular TV Rangers. It's a $9.95, 152-page book, shipping in May.

HARRIS COMICS
Vengeance of Vampirella #15, Part 2 of Vampi's "Mystery Walk" origin story, features a giant pull-out poster by Buzz (who also drew the variant, one-in-20 cover) and a cover by Chris Berkeley. It ships in June....Three different artists offer their takes on Harris's Rook—specifically, how he went from being a time-traveling adventurer to a mystic warrior—in June's *Rook* #0. Three interpretations of the story "Shiny Baubles" are by Caesar, John Stinsman, and regular *Rook* artist (when the ongoing series begins) Kirk Van Wormer. *V. of V.* and *Rook* will be $2.95 each.

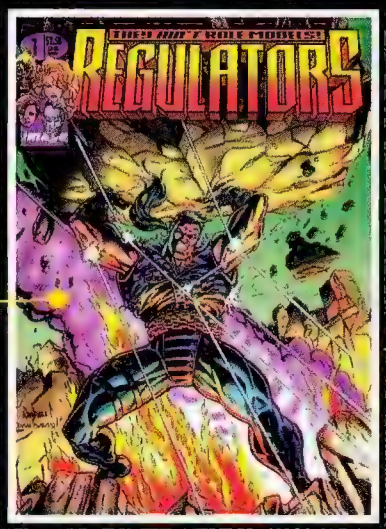
IMAGE COMICS
• **Extreme Studios**
"Extreme 3000" kicks off in August and September with four books—*Prophet*, *Youngblood*, *NewMen*, and *Supreme*—forming Extreme's new family of titles. "These four books form the nucleus of the Extreme 3000 universe and will present readers with a tight, consistent world, and defines the look for the Image universe in the distant future," said Marketing Director Matt Hawkins in a press release. Youngblood will police the world of the year 3000, where the 1,000-year-old Badrock has set up dozens of Youngblood squadrons to police the law. The secret society of NewMen consistently plagues Youngblood's "police state." Prophet is contained in a cryogenic capsule in one of these prison states. Descendants of Supreme also figure in the mix....A few goodies are due in July. Look for the *Badrock Annual* ($2.95) featuring a cover by Legend creator Arthur Adams. The *Glory* trade paperback ($9.95) arrives, compiling the heroine's first four issues, with artwork and cover by Mike Deodato Jr. and storytelling by Jo Duffy. The *Extreme Sacrifice* TPB is a nine-comic collection telling the complete crossover tale.

• **Highbrow Entertainment**
Super Patriot: Liberty and Justice #1, by Keith Giffen, Tom and Mary Bierbaum, and Dave Johnson, ships in June. In it, the SuperPatriot meets his illegitimate kids, and they all go off to fight that villainous group, the Covenant of the Sword....Look for *Freak Force* #18, the final issue, to ship in June. As creator Erik Larsen puts it, "Buy it to complete your collection!"

• **Shadowline, Ink**
Shipping in June is *Regulators* #1, by Kurt Busiek, with art by Ron Randall and Dan Davis. This issue focuses on Blackjack, the toughest member of the Regulators, who just happen to be a group of unrepentant supervillains.

• **Todd McFarlane Productions**
Wizard congratulates Terry Fitzgerald on his promotion to Executive Vice President of TMP's toy division, Todd Toys.

• **Top Cow Productions, Inc.**
The July release of the *Cyblade/Shi Special* will feature alternate covers. Cyblade creator Marc Silvestri (*Cyberforce*), will draw one cover, while the other will be done by William Tucci, creator of *Shi*. A percentage of the sales from the special will go to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. Silvestri's cover will be his last work seen for an undetermined period because he has announced a hiatus for the remainder of the year to work on a secret comic project. Top Cow Director of Promotions Nicole Merke wouldn't reveal the project, except



REGULATORS™ & © Jim Valentino

Continued on page 30

SHIPPING IN JULY FROM HARRIS COMICS

VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA®

HARRIS COMICS

THE ORIGIN OF VAMPIRELLA CONTINUES TO UNFOLD IN

THE MYSTERY WALK #3

this July in

VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #16

PURSUIT

Vampirella and Walker are aided in their struggle against the Progeny assassins by the Offspring. Hunter joins the battle and administers a killing blow to Vampirella!

RETAILERS: For every 20 copies ordered, 1 of the 20 will feature an alternate cover by BUZZ.

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Cover(s) by

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Busiek's Busy Summer

Kurt Busiek won't be experiencing any summertime blues this year, as he recently announced that he'll be involved in three major summer projects.

The monthly creator-owned ***Astro City*** will be coming from Image Comics this August or September, scripted by Busiek (*Marvels*), with interior art by **Brent Anderson** (*Somerset Holmes*) and painted covers by Busiek's *Marvels* partner, **Alex Ross**, who is also involved in character design.

Busiek said *Astro City* will finally bring to fruition a concept he's had for a long time. "As far back as junior high school," he admitted, "I would joke around with my friends about the sorts of things that must go on in superhero universes, things that we never get to see. Lawyers who go into court and have to argue that the murder victim's not really dead but in a death-like coma, [and] supervillains' wives saying, 'Yes, honey, ruling the world sounds fine, but how about fixing the dishwasher this weekend?' Stuff like that. I mean, the adventures of the superheroes are interesting and all, but what must go on behind the scenes is what fascinates me.

"The success of *Marvels* gave me the clout for people to take a proposal like this seriously, and the two are thematically connected. *Marvels* showed what it would be like to live in the Marvel Universe through the eyes of an everyman journalist. *Astro City* will show what it's like to live in a superhero universe through a variety of different perspectives."

Richard Starkings (*Marvels*) will handle lettering and design on the title, with color and separations by **Steve Buccellatto** (*Generation X*).

Also on tap for Busiek is Marvel's ***Untold Tales of Spider-Man***, which begins this summer, with pencils by **Pat Olliffe** (*Warlock & The Infinity Watch*). "The title will be set during the early days of Spider-Man, weaving in and out of established continuity to tell 'unseen' adventures," Busiek said. "There will be new villains introduced, new stories of classic villains, and new supporting characters—or, more properly, greater roles given to some of the those people seen in the backgrounds at Midtown High and elsewhere."

Kurt Busiek, busy beaver.

Untold Tales will be designed for new Spidey readers, Busiek noted, but said that attention will be paid to how the stories fit into existing continuity and promised "some interesting wrinkles in terms of how these untold stories affect modern continuity." Each issue will contain 20 pages of story.

Lastly, ***The New ShadowHawk*** will be an eight-times-a-year title from Image's Shadowline, Ink studio; #1 is scheduled for release in late June. **James W. Fry III** (*Moon Knight*) and **Andrew Pepoy** (*The Night Man*) will be handling the art chores. The book will feature "someone" in the ShadowHawk costume, according to Busiek, "but, in keeping with tradition, it's a mystery who it is. This won't go in anywhere near the same direction as the first run. We'll kick off the first issue with prophetic dreams, the birth of an occult adventurer, an appearance by what may be the 'first' ShadowHawk back in Colonial America, the beginnings of a mob war, and, of course, the introduction of the new ShadowHawk."

Busiek promised an early guest appearance by Freak Force's **Mighty Man**, a goodly selection of new villains, and "a pretty bizarre mystery."

—Jack Curtin

to say that "Marc will be examining new properties for Top Cow." Merke went on to say, "It is important that people realize that Marc is not taking a sabbatical. He will continue to work, concentrating on the animation and this new project." Silvestri will continue to monitor plot development and character direction for *Cyberforce*.

• **WildStorm Productions**

Alan Moore (*Violator*) becomes the regular writer of *WildC.A.T.s* with issue #21 coming in June....Get the tissues out, 'cause *WetWorks* #9, also shipping in June, sees the death of Claymore....The four-issue mini-series, *Spartan: Warrior Spirit*, is written by Kurt Busiek, with art by Mike McKone and Mark McKenna. The leader of the WildC.A.T.s falls in battle and awakens with a wife, a father-in-law who's a scientist, and absolutely no memories of his past. The issue, shipping in July, retails at $2.50....*Team 1: StormWatch* #1 by Steve Seagle and Tom Raney, and *Team 1: WildC.A.T.s* #1, by James Robinson and Rich Johnson, reveal a whole bunch of cool facts about earlier versions of your favorite teams. Both two-issue mini-series begin in July for $2.50 an issue...Join in the summer fun with two hot books. The 48-page one-shot *Voodoo/Zealot: Skin Trade*, by Steve Seagle and Michael Lopez, promises plenty of action and swimsuits! There's also the *WildStorm Swimsuit Special* #2, which stars all those hot WildStorm characters in as little clothing as possible!

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

Will Eisner's *Dropsie Avenue: The Neighborhood* tells the tale of a New York neighborhood where Dutch, Italian, Irish, and Jewish immigrants struggle to survive. This black-and-white 176-page epic ships in June for $15.95....*Taboo* #8 features some frightening tales by P. Craig Russell, David Lloyd, Jeff Nicholson, Greg Capullo, Moebius, and more. This mature readers book is available in June for only $14.95.

LIGHTNING COMICS

If the nude variant cover of April's *Hellina: Taking Back the Night* #1 wasn't enough for you, Lightning has plans for a whole year's worth of buck-naked Bad Girl covers. July's *Hellina: Kiss of Death* #1 (which will be in black-and-white, and not color, as previously solicited, and will include a new Hellina poster), August's *Hellina/Bloodfire: Hellfire Crossover* #1 (featuring Lightning's two premier characters taking out a compound of the cult 7th Day), and December's *Hellina Holiday Special* #1 all feature nude-cover editions. It's all part of the company's Hellina Nude campaign, which may be capped off with a Hellina model kit in 1995 or 1996. This kit may offer two different ways to create Hellina's body.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

Razor spoiler alert! LNS publisher (and TV trivia whiz) Everette Hartsoe has just revealed to us that the fourth and final issue of the *Razor: Burn* mini-series will feature the *death* of Razor! Yes, after a fierce battle with her sister Stryke, the ultraviolent Bad Girl will get a taste of her own medicine. It all happens in June, the same month her regular series changes from *Razor* to *Razor: Uncut*, with issue #15. The black-and-white title will offer pre-death stories "until her story catches up to the time of her death," Hartsoe says. While both books are $3, *Razor: Burn* #4 will be polybagged with a tarot card, and *Razor: Uncut* #15 is for mature audiences.

MALIBU COMICS

John Statema debuts as regular penciler of *Prime* with #24 in June....The *Mortal Kombat: Baraka* one-shot ships in June, featuring the inhuman mutant....Debuting in June is the six-issue bi-weekly *Codename: Firearm*, featuring an all-new Firearm. #0 is co-written by David Quinn and Marv Wolfman, with each going solo with every other issue. Also, each ish will have a backup story featuring the original Firearm, written by his creator, James Robinson. The new Firearm has two different costumes designed by *UltraForce*'s George Pérez....Originally scheduled in April, *Strikeback! Special* #1 will ship in July.

MARVEL COMICS

The X-book carrying over from "The Age of Apocalypse" story will be *X-Man*, the first post-timeflip issue of which will ship in May...."Maximum Clonage"(no joke) runs though the Spider-titles in June, as

Continued on page 32

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GIFFEN...IN JULY FROM ACCLAIM COMICS!

Comico and Elementals Return

With the demise of Defiant and quite a bit of downsizing at Marvel and Valiant, it may be surprising to learn of the return of another comics company that has been absent from the market for a few years. **Comico** returns in June with plans to publish at least 30 issues during 1995.

While Comico's successful superhero comic, *Elementals*, has been on hiatus, the company has been preparing a media blitz and lined up creators including **Alex Ross** (*Marvels*), **Geof Darrow** (*Hard Boiled*), **Art Adams** (*Monkeyman & O'Brien*), **Dave Gibbons** (*Give Me Liberty*), **Alan Davis** (*Clan Destine*), and **Simon Bisley** (*Lobo*) to relaunch this June in what could evolve into one of 1995's success stories. The relaunch will continue through the summer with one new title per month.

Oblivion, written by CD-ROM game designer **Jack Herman** with art by **Andy Dimitt**, is the first six-issue mini-series to begin in June. The premise is a "summit meeting" between Heaven and Hell that evolves into a war.

Elementals, which at one time shipped in numbers equal to many of Marvel and DC's superhero comics, will return to comic stores this spring in both monthly form and graphic novel form when ***Elementals: Ghost of a Chance*** is published. Ross is doing the cover for this graphic novel, while *Elementals* creator **Bill Willingham** writes, and *Star Wars* artist **Tony Akins** provides the art.

Bisley also lends his hand in promoting ***Red Dragon,*** a new comic with art from Akins. A press release describes *Red Dragon* as "the extremes of Quentin Tarantino, the weirdness of David Lynch, the mayhem of Hong Kong cinema, and the adrenaline rush of arcade action games."

While many companies have planned such publishing schedules before, Comico is committed to getting its products out on time, as all of these comics will already have been completed before solicitation.

—Henry T. Colonna

Oblivion™ & © Comico

Comico returns with the Elementals *and* Oblivion *(above).*

TRU Studios is Jammin' with Death

Ever wonder what your favorite comic artists think about death? Now is your chance to see for yourself, and help a worthwhile charity at the same time.

Faces of Death, a new limited edition, 750-copy "jam" print from *Trollords* publishers TRU Studios, is a compilation of 70 of the industry's hottest comic book artists, each providing their own original depiction of death. All profits from the 19-inch by 25-inch, black-and-white $10 print will be contributed to the Ronald McDonald House, which benefits families of children who are seriously ill and hospitalized. TRU's **Scott Beaderstadt** and **Paul Fricke** unveiled the print at the Mid-Ohio Comics Con in November.

Contributors include: **Terry Gilliam** (of Monty Python fame); Golden- and Silver-Age great **Alex Toth**; **Dave Sim**; **John Byrne**; **James O'Barr** (*The Crow*); **Don Simpson** (*Bizarre Heroes*); **Howard Chaykin**; and **Berke Breathed** (*Bloom County*).

The jam print will also appear in this summer's *Trollords Classics* reprint trade paperback. According to Beaderstadt, an equally impressive line-up of creators have already signed on for *Faces of Death II*, due in the fall, schedules permitting.

"We've got a lot of new people signed on for the second print," Beaderstadt said. "**Bernie Wrightson**, **Sergio Aragonés**, **Walt Simonson**, **Jeff Smith**, and **Neil Gaiman** have agreed so far. And we're still contacting others to contribute as well. We'll probably unveil *Faces of Death II* at this year's Mid-Ohio Con since the first one was so well received last year."

—Gary St. Lawrence

Continued from page 30

the whole clone saga comes to a close. But not too much of a close, as September is "Scarlet Spider Month," which is celebrated with *Amazing Fantasy* #16 and *The Adventures of Peter & Mary Jane* #1 (of 4). It is unclear as to what the featured stories will be....Speaking of Spidey, it looks like *Marvel Team-Up* is back in business with the announcement of *Spider-Man Team-Up* #1, shipping in August. More on this one as it comes in....The Starjammers from the X-books gain their own three-issue mini in August....Warren Ellis and Mike Deodato Jr. become *Thor's* new team this summer with #491....Conan relaunches (again) in June with *Conan* #1 by Larry Hama (*Wolverine*) and Barry Crain, and *Conan the Savage* #1 by Chuck Dixon, Roy Thomas, Alcatena, and Tim Conrad....In June is the debut of Marvel's Alterniverse, including *What If?* and the new ongoing *Ruins*, which takes a look at an alternate, darker future of the Marvel Universe, as seen through that world's Phil Sheldon (the photographer of the *Marvels* series)....In July's *Daredevil* #343, DD gets his old red costume back....In August is a crossover story within *Iron Man*, *War Machine*, and *Force Works* that will be illustrated by *Force Works* and *Aquaman* artist Jim Calafiore. Word has it that it will feature the mysterious Century. More on this as it becomes available. Calafiore also has an *X-Men 2099* annual on tap for this summer....In September, *Avengers Unlimited* launches, as does an *Avengers: Year One* bookshelf series.

MAXIMUM PRESS

Based on the '70s TV show, *Battlestar Galactica* #1 picks up with Adama dying and Apollo assuming command over the fleet. Plus: they finally find Earth, but is it too late? It's slated to ship in July, by Rob Liefeld, Robert Napton, and Karl Altstaetter....July is "Zero Month" with *Black Flag* and *Warchild*, which, according to a press release, is "a perfect jumping-on point for readers."

MILESTONE MEDIA

After Milestone's *The Long Hot Summer* crossover ends in July, Milestone will debut two new titles, one of them to be written by *Shadow Cabinet's* Matt Wayne. We'll reveal more details on these titles as we get them....If you read this by early May and have a hook-up to America Online, you may be able to participate in Milestone's major "Long Hot Summer" forum event. Milestone folks like Editor-in-Chief Dwayne McDuffie will be "speaking" to fans through cyberspace, answering questions and offering scoops on the company's future projects. It all happens on May 3, at 7 p.m. E.S.T., in the DC Online network's auditorium, so check it out!

MIRAGE STUDIOS

Due to a major water leak, Mirage lost a ton of important information and artwork. Because of this, a number of books have been postponed. Those included are *Casey Jones & Raphael* #2-#5, *Construct* #1-#5, and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (vol. 2) #9-#13. Mirage will begin resoliciting these books starting in August.

NOW COMICS

In May's *Green Hornet* #46, can the Green Hornet and Kato get rid of the bombs in Trendle International Airport? Pick it up and find out....Also in May, *Syphons Annual* #1 hits the stands, bringing the Syphons in to locate and neutralize a doomsday device. Both will be hitting the stores in May.

RIVAL PRODUCTIONS

Look for more state-of-the-art 3-D computer backgrounds in *Eye of the Storm* #3 this June. This is the issue where all of the characters are pretty much established, and the team truly comes together for the first time.

SANCTUARY PRESS

Normalcy goes out the window for two "regular" people when they realize they're malevolent killers in *Heresy*, Sanctuary's full-color vampire and werewolf title coming out this fall. More details when we find 'em out.

TOPPS COMICS

X-Philes rejoice! *The X-Files Special Edition* collects the hard-to-find *X-Files* #1-#3, and ships in June for $3.95. In July, there's an *X-Files* trade paperback collecting the first six issues.

Actual size of Metal Print 6 1/2" x 10"
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In Memoriam: Don Heck 1929-1995

Veteran comic-book artist Don Heck, the original penciler of ***Iron Man*** and one of the premier artists for ***The Avengers,*** both for Marvel Comics, died February 23, at the age of 66. The cause was lung cancer.

After beginning as a production artist at Harvey Comics in the 1940s, Heck went freelance, picking up work at a variety of publishers. In 1954, he began work for Atlas (Marvel's name at the time) on war, Western, romance, and mystery titles. In 1957, he went through an 18-month hiatus when editor Stan Lee had to cut back staff, but later returned to replace the deceased Joe Maneely.

Heck's first superhero assignment was the original Iron Man strip in ***Tales of Suspense*** **#39**, working over character designs by Jack Kirby. He worked on Giant-Man and Thor as well, but it's his long run on *The Avengers* that fans most remember. In that period, Heck had a reputation for drawing the best-looking women in comics, a reputation built on his depictions of such heroines as the Scarlet Witch, the Wasp, and the Black Widow.

Personal setbacks, including the death of his wife and a string of illnesses, resulted in an admitted decline in the quality of Heck's work in the mid-1970s, although his professionalism never suffered—he met every deadline and completed every assignment. The turnaround came at the very end of the '70s, when editor Len Wein assigned him to *The Flash,* in which Heck contributed a 16-issue run in issues #280-#295.

He was capable of self-deprecating humor. *Marvels* writer **Kurt Busiek** recalled an interview in which Heck said, "I've been doing this comics stuff for 35 years now, and y'know—I think I'm starting to get the hang of it."

Fellow *Avengers* artist **George Pérez** summed up Heck's place in the industry this way: "He was unappreciated in so many ways—but I know that he knew a whole generation of artists revered him for the deceptively simple storytelling style he managed so well. He was one of the grand old men who helped me mold my future. Memories of his work will always inspire me and bring a wistful smile to my face."

Heck was still active in the industry prior to his death. Recent assignments included work on the Topps "Kirby-verse" character Night Glider, and completely redrawing an early Iron Man story when Marvel discovered it no longer had file copies available for reprinting.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

UP & COMING

PAUL PELLETIER

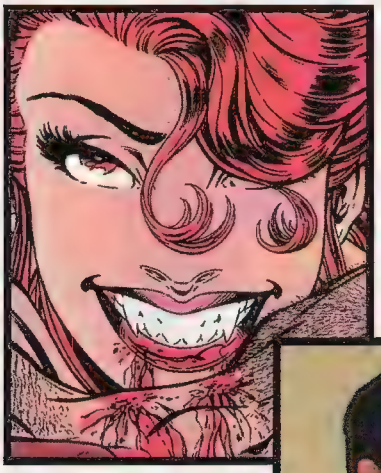
Paul Pelletier claims that "sooner or later I'm going to have to take a break." But the 25-year-old penciler who ran straight out of high school and into comic book prominence on the strength of work in such titles as DC's *The Outsiders*, Malibu's *Ex-Mutants*, Marvel's *The Incredible Hulk*, and, coming shortly, DC's *Green Lantern*, is quite happy to be in demand.

"I can't complain," says the happy camper. "It beats working 40 hours a week in a shoe factory."

Pelletier, born, raised, and still living in Maine, states that there's a reason the phone keeps ringing. "The main thing is that I'm very good with deadlines. I also tend to have a pretty clean style and I try to concentrate a lot on storytelling. I get a lot of calls from writers who tend to like that in me."

The pencil pusher, an X-Men-Iron Fist-Alpha Flight kind of kid, had one "basic art course" in high school before deciding, "What the heck, I'll make a go of it."

Pelletier bypassed the usual "send out samples and hit the conventions" route by making inroads with the Maine-based Zen Comics, Hammock Publications, and Alpha Publications on such titles as *Zen, Intergalactic Ninja*, *Wayward Warrior*, and *Totem*. "I was pretty much the only person in the Maine area pursuing comic book art. Everybody else I knew kind of gave up on it. Plus, I was willing to work real cheap and [without a firm assignment]."



Paul's grunt work bore fruit when the people at Aircel Comics got wind of his talents and offered him a gig on *Demons' Tales* #1-#4. This led, in turn, to a call from Malibu and *Ex-Mutants* #1-#9 and *Exiles* #1 assignments. Marvel followed, offering Pelletier back-up work on *The Incredible Hulk* #406-#412 and *X-Force* #37.

"Then I got a call from DC," he relates, continuing the odyssey. "They started me out with a fill-in issue on *Darkstars* #10. Then I was given *The Outsiders* and have done issues #1-#19. After that, I'm going to get three issues of *Green Lantern* and then, who knows?"

Pelletier, who has also had a stopover at Image co-founder Jim Lee's Homage Studios where he created cards for upcoming WildC.A.T.s and Spawn sets as well as pinups for *Gen*[13] and *WildC.A.T.s*, points to his *Outsiders* work as his current greatest hit. "I think the last four issues were particularly good. I felt like I really nailed the characters with those issues. Early on, I thought my *Totem* stuff was real good. I tend to think my more current stuff is my best work."

Though a fan of comics, Pelletier marvels at the fact that people can take comic books so seriously. "I like it that people can be serious enough to get into the characters but I think, sometimes, they can take the whole thing a little too far. After all, it's comics books. It's not like it's life or death or anything."

—Marc Shapiro ☆

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PART 5

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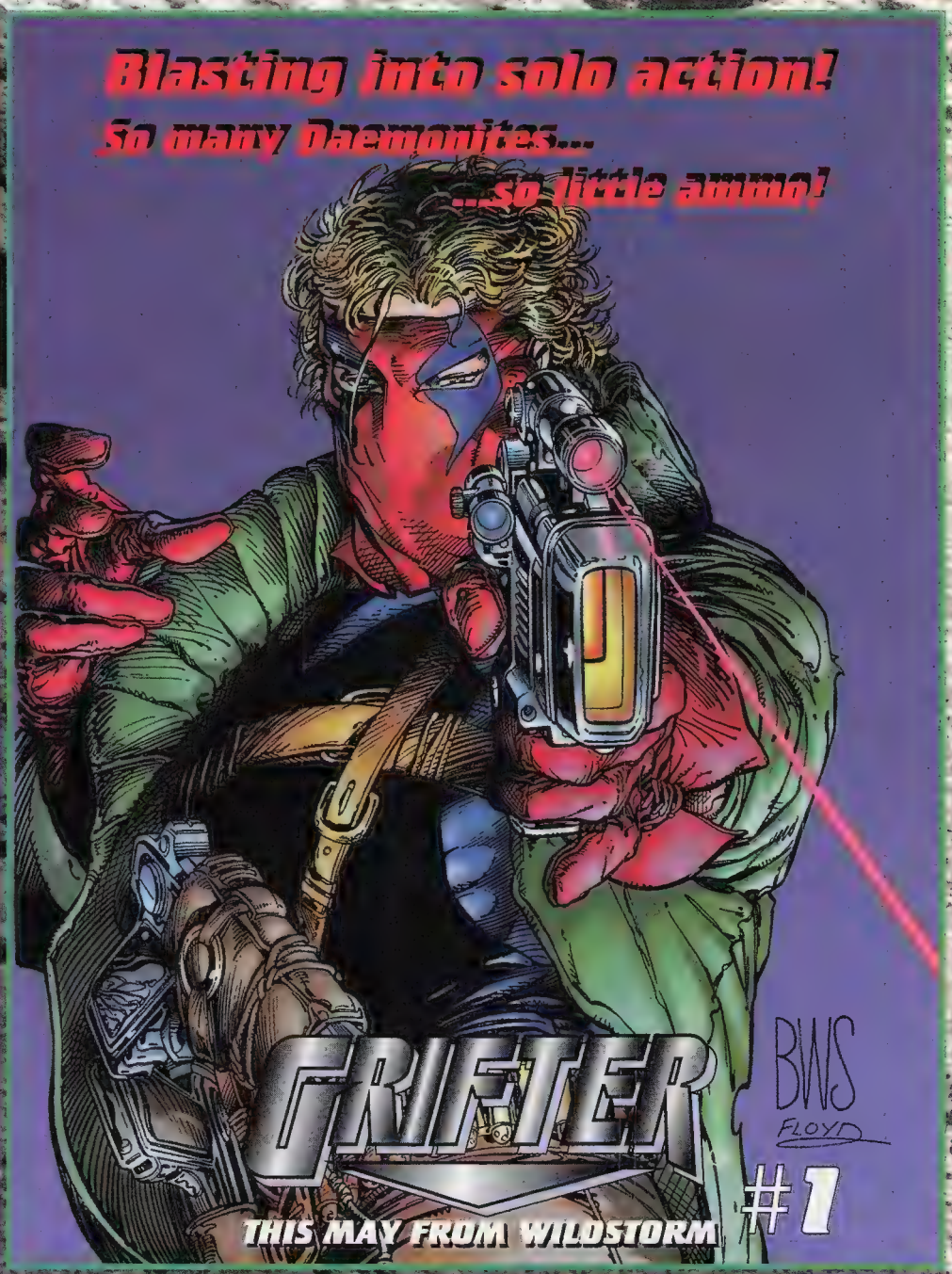

GRIFTER #1

THIS MAY FROM WILDSTORM

Cover by Barry Windsor-Smith

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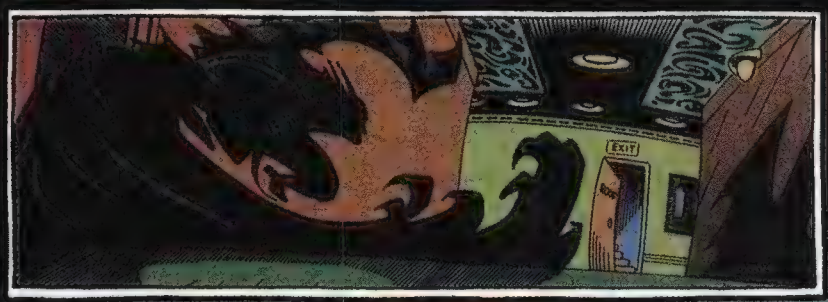
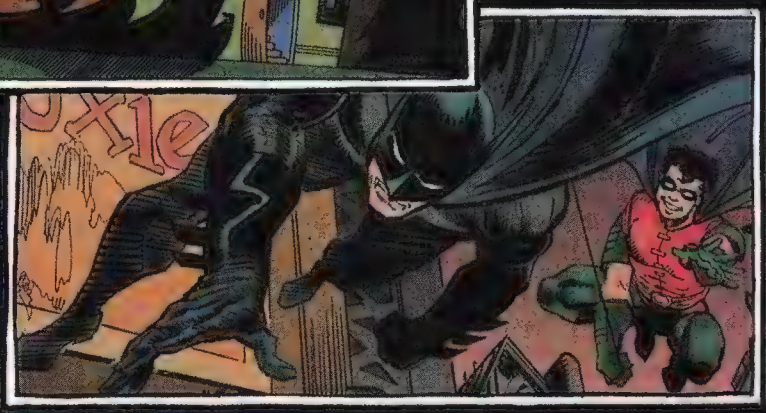
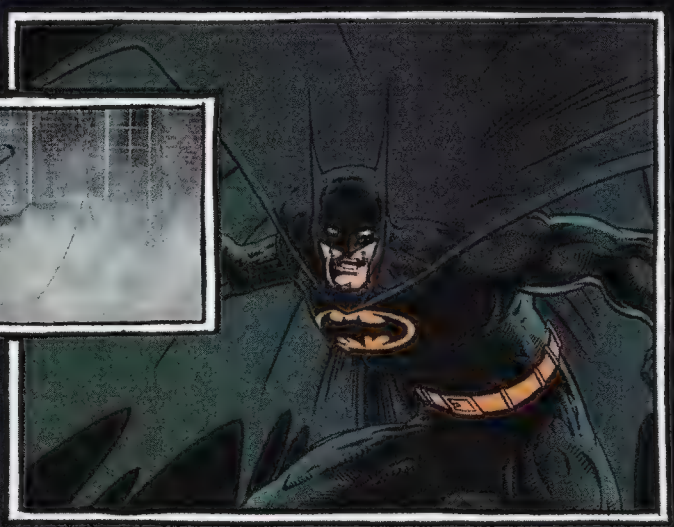
WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
image





In the Shadow of the Bat

The men behind the Dark Knight discuss *their* Batman, how Bruce Wayne is no Clark Kent, and why Alfred is more important than Robin.



By Jack Curtin

BATMAN and all related artwork and characters ™ & © DC Comics

The many faces, and artistic impressions, of the Dark Knight.

"He is perhaps the only genuine hero amongst all of them," Alan Grant says. "People say Batman is this dark, vengeance-driven, obsessed character, but that's not Batman to my eyes. That's just the fuel which drives Batman. The trauma of his parents' death is what motivates him and forces him to go on, but what makes him Batman is a decision. He took a decision to be a good guy, which is a decision in life not too many people do take. He is a self-made character. He didn't get superpowers, he's not a cyborg, he made a choice to be what he is. He is motivated by the terrible thing that happened to him when he was a kid, but that's not the thing that defines his character. What defines his character is his decision to do something."

Well, yes, agrees Doug Moench, although "I don't see Batman as being crazy, but I do see him as being obsessed. The obsession is not with revenge for his parents being killed, it's the obsession of a guy who went through the most horrible experience you can imagine, both parents being shot dead before his eyes, and he has been so affected by this—feels the trauma of that so deeply—that he is obsessed with making sure that no one else ever has to go through that. He is trying to prevent the same thing from ever befalling anybody else, rather than just getting revenge on all bad guys just because a bad guy killed his parents. I think that's a crucial difference."

Chuck Dixon brings the most startling nuance of all to the discussion. "My vision of Batman is perhaps a little meaner than the others. He's alone and he always will be alone. He keeps a distance from everyone, from all the people in his life, and that's the crux of it. The way I differ from most interpretations is that I think that, because he suffered his great trauma as a child, he reacted as a child. Putting on a costume, fighting crime at night in the guise of an animal—that's part of what makes him so enduring, but it's such a simple, childish, reaction to what happened to him. He responded in that horrible moment and it set the course for his life: I won't be afraid, I will become scarier than they are. It was the wish of a child."

These three are the keepers of the vision as the writers of the three main Batman books from DC Comics—Grant on *Batman: Shadow of the Bat*, Moench on *Batman*, and Dixon on *Detective Comics*.

And in the benevolent dictatorship that is the Batman Universe, the vision belongs to Bat-editor Denny O'Neil, who has held the editorial reins for the Dark Knight since 1986.

"Denny *is* Batman," says Jordan B. Gorfinkel, O'Neil's associate editor. "In our universe, he is the Master." But while O'Neil is the guiding force behind one of the finest archetypal characters ever, he tends to wield his influence in a looser, albeit just as effective, fashion.

"Denny makes it very clear to all of us how things work and what the vision is," says Gorfinkel, "and then he trusts us to get it right and keep it right. It's difficult sometimes to find the kind of writer he likes to work with, someone who is totally independent, who can meet with the editorial team and get a general overview of where we are headed for the next six months or so and then go away and, every 30 days, deliver a full script which is absolutely perfect."

Talent for the Game

His current writers "are among the most talented writers in comics or any other field," O'Neil said in recent comments on DC Comics Online, the publisher's America Online program, proceeding to characterize each by his strengths. "Doug Moench...has a classy prose style, an infallible sense of structure, and he does good action. Chuck Dixon...is the best action writer in the business at the moment. His stories move right along, and his sense of pacing is phenomenal. Alan Grant...is terrific at characterization...[and] he has a nice sense of the mythic aspect of our characters."

Grant has technically been a Bat-writer for the longest term, beginning his run with *Detective Comics* #583 and #584 in 1988, which he wrote with then-partner John Wagner at O'Neil's invitation. "Denny told us he'd been reading our Judge Dredd stories in [the British comic] *2000 A.D.* and wanted to see if we could bring the same brand of strange villains we'd created there to Batman," Grant recalls, "and he liked what we did enough to give us another assignment, [which was] a year's run on *Detective*. John and I split up midway through that, and I've been here ever since."

It is Moench, though, who has been affiliated with the character over an extended period of time. He did a run from 1982-87, during which he wrote both *Batman* and *Detective* for then-editor Len Wein, then came back to do the five-part "Prey" storyline with Paul Gulacy in *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #11-#15 (1990). He's been writing *Batman* since issue #481 (1992). "Denny wanted to make a clean sweep when he first took over the Bat-books," he says, "and I ended up doing some other things for a while. I was delighted when he asked me to come back."

Dixon is the new kid on the block, entering the Batman Universe with the first *Robin* mini-series in 1990-91 and taking over *Detective* as of issue #644 (1992), in addition to scripting the regular *Robin* monthly, which began in 1993. "I had seen Denny about a year before I got the first *Robin* assignment," he explains, "but I really didn't think I'd made that much of an impression. It turns out, though, that he'd been very impressed with my work on [Eclipse's] *Airboy*, and he thought I'd be the right person to write about a younger hero."

Opposing Reflections

The trio of Batman writers have distinctive writing styles and apparently such divergent views on many social issues that politics have been banned as a topic for discussion, according to Dixon's comments in a recent interview (*Wizard* #44), but their perspectives on Batman, as their comments on the character's origin which opened this piece show, appear to be more matters of emphasis than serious chasms.

Inside Batman Forever

By Cindy Pearlman

Holy Bat-fit. Chris O'Donnell was examining the costumes one day on the set of *Batman Forever*. Wham! He came upon one piece of wardrobe that was even more frightening than the Joker teaming up with the Penguin. The new Robin held a pair of green tights in his hands and shook his head.

"From then on, there became a rule: my Robin would not wear tights. I look horrible in them anyway," says O'Donnell, primed to play Batman's youthful ward, who will wear an armor-type suit.

And that's not the only Bat-change in this highly anticipated movie, opening June 16. Michael Keaton is out as the Caped Crusader; Val Kilmer is now the boss of the Batcave. Nicole Kidman is Gotham's new Bat-babe.

Jim Carrey takes on the role of the Riddler, while Tommy Lee Jones is playing Two-Face, as both try to bring an even mixture of Nicholson-esque insanity to *Forever*. Two-Face's minions are Bad Girls Drew Barrymore and Debi Mazar as Sugar and Spice. Even Batman's costume has been revamped to make it less clunky, more modern and hip.

So while Kilmer was getting fitted for his new Bat-outfit, Tommy Lee Jones was prepar-

ing for Two-Face. "I really couldn't wait to do a Batman [film]," Jones says. "My son brought me the comic books and showed me this Two-Face character. My son was Batman for Halloween. If I didn't do the part, my boy would have been pretty mad."

Carrey is also overjoyed with his role. "I *am* the Riddler," he says. "This is my childhood dream come true. I'm gonna whip Batman's butt. You'll need a pet detective to find the bat."

Behind the scenes, Carrey didn't consult with the original Riddler, Frank Gorshin. "I didn't allow him on the set. No way!" Carrey says, pretending to be mad. "This Riddler is mine, mine, mine." Likewise, O'Donnell didn't get advice from TV Robin Burt Ward.

As usual, *Batman Forever* is shrouded in Hollywood secrecy. New director Joel Schumacher (*The Client*) admits, "I want Batman to be a little funnier and less dark. The TV series had a lot of humor in it that was missing from the first two films." The director adds that those who doubt Kilmer's abilities should remember this: "I recall when it was announced that Michael Keaton was playing Batman before the first film and everyone said, 'Michael Keaton? No way that will work out.' And those people were proved wrong, as will Val's critics."

Adding to the mystery, O'Donnell won't even say how Robin shows up at millionaire Bruce Wayne's house. "Read the comic books. If you're a comic book nut, then you'll know. It's just like the comics," he says. O'Donnell will cop to the fact that Robin wears leather as Dick Grayson and drives the Batboat, but not the Batwing plane. "The movie is like being in an amusement park," he says.

And so far, what a ride. In the *Batman Forever* trailer released in late February, Kilmer is riveting as a younger and far sexier Batman. So is O'Donnell (*Scent of a Woman*, *The Three Musketeers*) as his sidekick Robin, complete with a buzz haircut, sideburns, and a diamond earring. "This is Batman for the '90s," says O'Donnell.

Photos courtesy Warner Bros. ™ & © DC Comics.

"Doug and I are on opposite sides of the political spectrum, and after years of bouncing back and forth between us because his viewpoint is Batman," explains Dixon, "but it generally doesn't present a problem. It's never thrown upon a story idea which would be mostly suited because of our differing views, and we don't do it. Wayne sometimes, it's like trying to have Mickey Spillane and Raymond Chandler collaborate on a story, but we work it out."

The longer "Knightfall" and "Knightsend" storylines, plus the "Prodigal" cycle which followed, consumed most of 1992-94 and helped define Batman for the '90s. The result, the opinion of many, is that both Bruce and the fans have a firmer understanding that Batman is Bruce Wayne and that he chooses to never pick up a gun or take a life, rather than making him some sort of superhero wimp, one is left the very things that make him heroic.

Grant says that his own perspective on the character is summarized by "the same kids that would come up to us at a convention, a year or two ago and say, 'Why doesn't he just kill the Joker and get it all over with?' Now, I'm not and saying that was really cool the way Batman looked Lady Shiva and thinking he looked that guy and the way he maintains his code of honor."

However, counterpoint Moench, there are those who still long for a less personally fallible Dark Knight. "We've gotten several letters from people who obviously have been in the crossing gun control argument, all of a sudden why we take the 'liberal' position," he says. "But it has nothing to do with that. A young boy saw a gun used to kill his parents, and he hates guns. It's not a political decision, it has nothing to do with the NRA, nothing to do with the rights to have guns for hunting or whatever. It's just that this particular guy, has gone through this traumatic moment, hates guns and will never touch a gun. It's part of the character's origin, plain and simple."

Who Wears the Mask?

If Bruce Wayne is now confined as the origin and future Batman, one suspects that his personal life may well be the next aspect of the ongoing mythology to undergo a metamorphosis. At times we've been shown barely the same man of the mid-1980s playboy, and it's time we saw a maturing and settled-down Bruce. In a strange kind of reversal, Bruce Wayne is now only a mask that Batman puts on, rather than Batman being a mask that Bruce Wayne puts on," says Grant.

To me, the real guy is Batman," agrees Moench. "From the moment his parents died, the young Bruce Wayne dedicated himself to becoming something else. Bruce Wayne is the great Batman impersonation, Bruce Wayne is in order to facilitate his work as Batman."

The problem, Dixon acknowledges, is that the latter role is rarely as very interesting. "Bruce Wayne is a very shallow man outside. We're trying to give him a little more depth, but he'll never be Clark Kent. Clark Kent was Superman's way of belonging, his family, of not being alone in the world, to have family and friends. Bruce, on the other hand, keeps to himself. He doesn't want anybody knowing his secrets, he doesn't want to belong. Batman has never put the effort into developing Bruce's personality that he should. And we're going to try and redress that, because he's really sort of a dull character as he is. I'd say that Michael Keaton's portrayal in the first Batman movie is close to what we're going to be striving for, a guy who's sort of distracted all the time."

Not only would a more interesting Bruce Wayne be another high-potential element for the writers to work with, Grant contends, but his presence could facilitate interaction with Batman's steadily growing supporting cast. "My personal fear is that it's sometimes too easy to have Batman become kind of a regular crime-fighter," he says, "one of the boys. I don't like it at all when he becomes too friendly with other people. Of late, we've had both Batman and Robin interacting with a lot of other characters like Harvey Bullock, Lt. Montoya, Hugo Strange, Gordon's wife. Now, all these are good characters in their own right, but I think they should be used in subplots, showing what's going on in the police department and such, rather than interacting directly with Batman or Robin. I personally prefer Batman's relations with the police force to be completely through Commissioner Gordon, for example. Gordon has never seen him without the mask as far as he knows, but he's a clever guy and could probably find out if he really wanted to. But Gordon, he's made a conscious decision I don't need to know this. That seems to me the only sort of person Batman would be comfortable with."

Moench and Dixon, on the other hand, are more focused on the opportunities that the presence of a familiar supporting cast creates. "I don't think you can ever have too many good characters," argues the former. "The only problem might be that you don't have enough space to devote time to all of them, so some might fade away without you even noticing. I enjoy writing them, and I particularly like Bullock—but then, I created him."

"I like all the cops," says Dixon. "I've been adding cops to the series right from the start. I enjoy those kinds of characters anyway, and since we deal with straight crime so much in Detective from they do in the other books, I guess it's only natural that I'd put my own stamp on things." Dixon is preparing to write a four-issue Batman: GCPD mini-series about the Gotham cops, to be illustrated by veteran Batman artist (and current Green Arrow artist) Jim Aparo. It should appear late this year or early in 1996.

Life never seems easy for the Caped Crusader.

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The Importance of Being Alfred

The one supporting character everyone agrees is essential to the series is Alfred, Wayne's loyal butler, who has been missing since the end of 1994's "KnightQuest" storyline. All are delighted, therefore, that the Grant-scripted one-shot, *Nightwing: Alfred's Return*, will ship to stores in late May.

"Alfred is absolutely vital to the stories," Grant claims. "Batman depends on Alfred, and I'd say he is the most important secondary character, even more important than Robin. The reason is that Alfred understands—he may not understand how he can do it—but he understands that Bruce has to be Batman. He is a hero on a smaller scale, because he's devoted his life to serving a hero. Alfred is the perfect foil for Batman and provides practical help as well."

"I've certainly missed Alfred," agrees Moench. "In his absence, we've tried to do scenes about how Bruce really didn't know how to do a lot of things without Alfred, and didn't realize how much he really depended upon him, so that he's begun to realize that Alfred was not just the guy who did the laundry and cooked the food. He misses Alfred's input and wisdom. Alfred is very much an arch, a dry-witted anchor for Batman, someone who brings him down to earth when he's getting too obsessed, too dark, too focused on doing what he does as Batman.

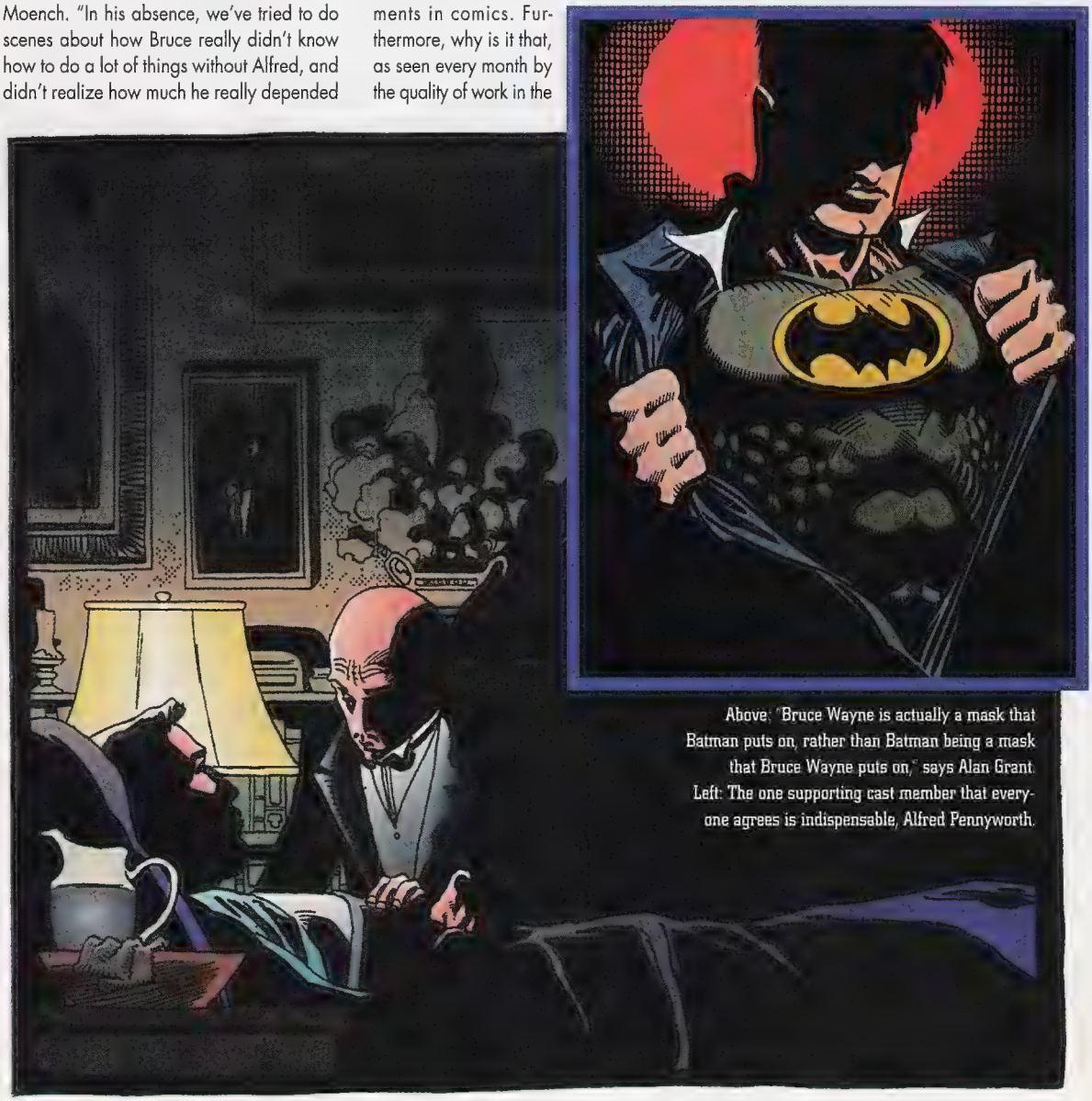
"I have a fond spot for Robin, of course, and I think that he and Alfred and Batman are an inseparable trio, when you get right down to it. Writing stories without Alfred have been a pain. First of all, I love writing Robin-Alfred scenes. The first time I realized I had a handle on the Bat-world was when I wrote a Robin-Alfred scene and liked it. It's such a great relationship: they can both talk about this weirdo they hang around with."

A Story for Everyone

Writing Batman for a living, with or without Alfred, is clearly one of the dream assignments in comics. Furthermore, why is it that, as seen every month by the quality of work in the Bat-anthology, *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*, almost everyone who gets a crack at the character seems to produce an outstanding bit of storytelling?

"I would say that every writer and every artist has that one great Batman story in him," says Grant. "In that sense, I think he's very similar to Tarzan, who was one of the characters I wrote when I first started in comics. One's in Gotham City and one's in the jungle, but both of them know exactly what they're doing, and that's very appealing to a writer."

Moench touches upon an aspect of the character that many people don't often think about. "Batman is a great character because he is so primal, so elemental, so believable. Who he is and what he does is very unlikely, admittedly, and we push it to the very limit, but it is still possible to believe that a guy could be that smart, could train himself to be like that. The thing I think really adds to the appeal of writing a Batman story is Gotham



Above: "Bruce Wayne is actually a mask that Batman puts on, rather than Batman being a mask that Bruce Wayne puts on," says Alan Grant. Left: The one supporting cast member that everyone agrees is indispensable, Alfred Pennyworth.

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City. To me, Gotham is always one of the characters in the story and is probably the best milieu available in comics. The only comparable location I can think of was the nameless city in which Will Eisner's Spirit lived. And I very much like the '30s New York in which the Shadow operated. But Gotham has everything they had—and more."

For Dixon, it is a matter of the fundamental appeal of Batman, something that is being manifested daily right before his eyes. "My son is two-and-a-half and he is thoroughly enamored of Batman," he says. "Sure, Batman's sort of a member of the family, he's around all the time in one form or another, but it's something more than that. He's responding exactly the way I did when I was a kid. As for why writers all seem to want to do a Batman story, I think that's because he can be adapted into all sorts of situations. I'll bet that 99 out of 100 Elseworlds proposals are probably Batman proposals, just because you can do anything you want with him. I mean, I've done Batman as a pirate, Batman as a samurai—you can tell any kind of story you want and still retain everything about him that is important. What more can you ask of a character?" ☆

Jack Curtin is a freelance writer based in Philadelphia, Pa.

Darker than ever.

The Last Batman Story

Each of the Bat-writers were asked: Suppose the phone rang one night, and it was boss Denny O'Neil. And he said to you, "Look, DC Comics has decided to stop doing Batman comics. You [Alan, Doug, or Chuck] have been selected to end it all, to write 'The Last Batman Story.'" What would you do?

Alan Grant laughs, "The first thing I'd have to do is say, 'Denny, you're kidding me.'" Then, after a pause, "He wouldn't die in it. The last Batman story would be just another good Batman story that would end with a long shot of Batman silhouetted against the moon and the Gotham skyline. A standard shot, with a caption that said that the last Batman story could never be told. There are more stories out there; we're just not going to tell them."

Chuck Dixon has much the same reaction, but with some further thoughts. "I guess Batman would just keep on being Batman, doing what he's doing. He's not going to stop," he agrees. "But I think Tim Drake would at some point stop being Robin and go off and have a normal life. Dick Grayson wouldn't do that, and Jason Todd probably wouldn't have, but Tim is a guy who might very easily one day say, 'OK, I don't want to do this anymore, I'm not getting a kick out of it anymore.' And he would just stop. I guess what I'm saying is I could write the 'Last Robin Story.'"

Doug Moench disagrees. "Batman would have to very heroically die at the end of the story. It would have to be a very tragic but heroic story, a story of the ultimate sacrifice. It would represent everything that Batman has ever been, taking it right over the edge. There's no other way that I could end it."

Of course, O'Neil has his own answer. "I could end it if I had to," he says. "I know how it all ends. There's a little secret that writers have: we keep the complete biographies of our characters in our heads. I know many little secrets about Batman that I've never revealed, but I know them because I've had to think about this one character for so long.

"So I have my own theory about how Batman will end up, and when. It's a rather benign theory; I don't think he's going to come to a particularly ugly end, though that's always a possibility. It's clear in my head that at some point he will stop doing this, and either pass it on or retire the cape and cowl, because he's human, he's very human. I don't think that would be an end to his crimefighting, and certainly not to his attempt to help the world, but at some point, if he survives, the way he does [these things] will have to change rather radically."

As a matter of fact, O'Neil confesses, the ultimate tale has already been told. "Once upon a time," he says, "I wrote what was, in my own mind, to be the final Batman story [*The Brave and the Bold* #159]. When I left DC to go to Marvel back in the '70s, I thought to myself that the story I was doing was the last Batman story I would ever write. I knew damned well that Julie Schwartz would publish Batman stories the month after I left and the month after that, but I didn't care. I didn't have to read them. As far as I was concerned, this retired the character. In that story, I killed off Ra's al Ghul, and Batman and Talia walked off into the sunset together. I had no reason to believe that I would ever return to Batman. In my own little private mythology, that ended it."

—Jack Curtin

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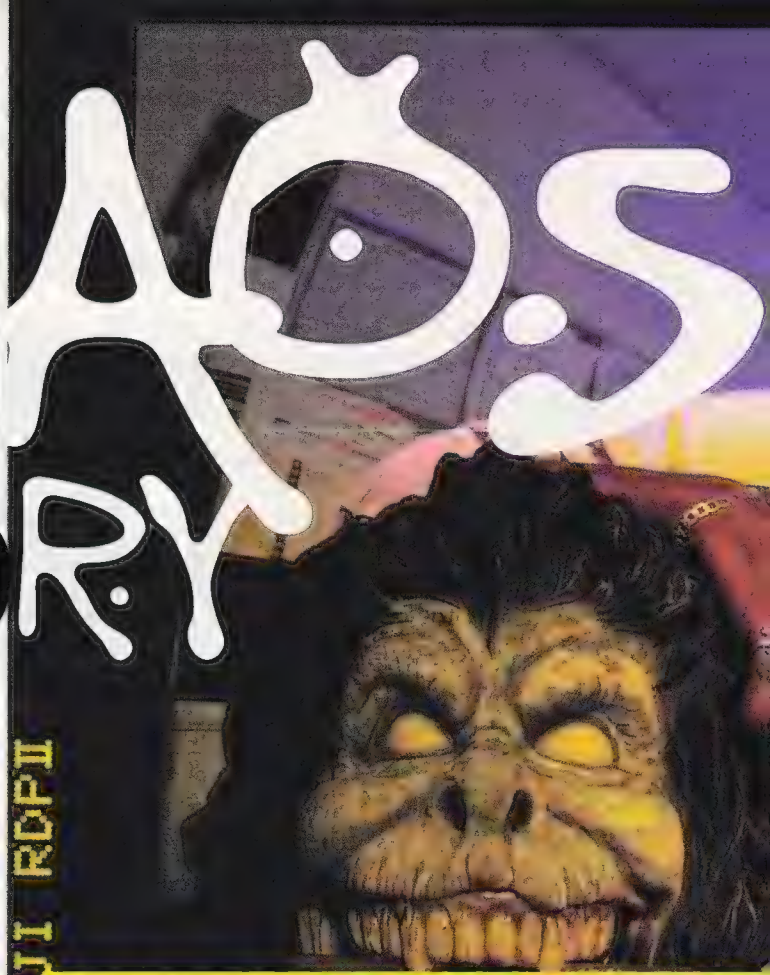

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CHAOS! COMICS PUBLISHER BRIAN PULIDO THROWS SOME COLD WATER ON SELF-PUBLISHING WANNABES WHO CAN'T WAIT TO TAP INTO THE BIG BUCKS.

Chaos! Comics publisher Brian Pulido offers one key bit of advice to anyone who wants to be a self publisher: Don't Do It.

"To become a self-publisher is insane," he says. "You have to be out of your mind. Your stress level is going to be teetering on overdrive. I experienced perpetual insanity for a year-and-a-half."

Under only one condition would he recommend doing something so nuts, he emphasizes. "To be a self-publisher, you'd better want to. You have to have a vision that you feel so strongly about that if you didn't do it, you couldn't go on. There are too many obstacles and too many conventional people who will tell you it can't be done."

Pulido admits that there are great benefits to doing it yourself, as he started doing when he published the second *Evil Ernie* mini-series, and then *Lady Death* and others. "The creative freedom is a big advantage," he says. "We love that we get to create without distractions and interference. It's also neat to see our comics embraced by the comics community, which is probably the most important thing to us." Another reward comes from meeting their many fans nationwide, including several rock stars.

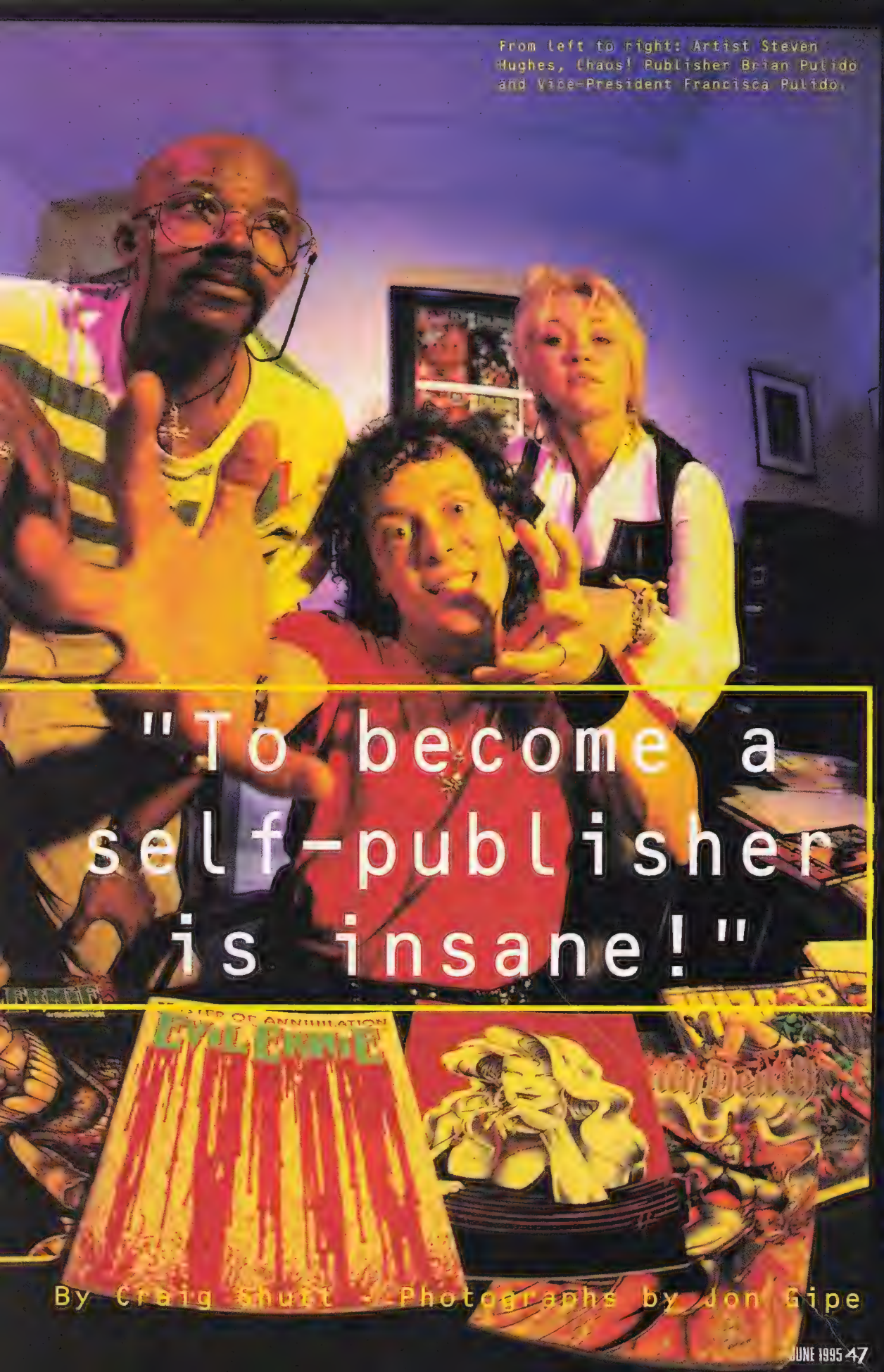
Even so, the drawbacks to self-publishing far outweigh the advantages, he warns. "The publisher is liable for everything," he explains. "If you succeed, you benefit. If you fail, you lose a lot of money. You're on the firing line 24 hours a day. If there's a printing problem at midnight, you're going to hear about it. You're going to give up a certain part of your life to have that creative freedom."

In explaining what he sees as the key points to becoming a self-publisher, Pulido stresses that his experience and opinions in no way represent the only successful approach. Each rule has a creator-publisher who broke it and profited. Many decisions depend on the creator's philosophical approach to the market and the publisher's goal, such as producing one book or creating a full line.

The market has changed dramatically since Chaos! formed nearly two years ago, he notes. "May 1993 is 100,000 years ago," he says, citing that year's enormous glut of comics. "It's a different world today." A major contraction in the amount of products being released today, and new players with huge promotional budgets, have created a market in which small publishers can be easily overlooked. Also, the recent developments with the industry's distribution companies—most notably, Marvel's going exclusive with Heroes World—could potentially make it even tougher for a new company to get its books out there, let alone successful on the shelves. "It's absolutely tougher and more difficult to enter the market now than when we did it," he says. "It's not even close."

Chaos! began when Pulido and co-founder Steven Hughes were working on the follow-up to their successful black-and-white *Evil Ernie* mini-series, published by Eternity, an imprint of Malibu Comics. Desiring more promotion of and personal dedication to their efforts, the two decided to do it themselves. "I was reluctant, but Steven said it was my destiny," he says.

All artwork and characters depicted ™ & © Brian Pulido



From left to right: Artist Steven Hughes, Chaos! Publisher Brian Pulido and Vice-President Francisca Pulido.

"To become a self-publisher is insane!"

By Craig Shutt - Photographs by Jon Gipe

When deadlines approach, everyone chips in—even pets!

Here are the key areas Pulido focused on to start publishing:

EDUCATION

Pulido's entrepreneurial reluctance stemmed from his total lack of knowledge about publishing. "I had absolutely no qualifications whatsoever to become a comics publisher," he laughs. "None. I couldn't tell you what a line screen or a color separation was."

To solve that, Pulido did what he stresses any potential self-publisher must do: Learn Everything You Can. He started by determining how a comic is produced and what each person in the channel needed, from creators to retailers. "Don't try to be an island or pretend you know it all," he says. "Ask for help. Lots of people are kind enough to offer really excellent advice.

"I'd be lying if I said I had it all figured out before the first book printed," he admits. "It took a lot of ass-whippings in the first six months for me to learn what I know. A lot of it has to be experienced. Education beforehand is a key, but you'll never be done learning things in this industry."

Every self-publisher has the best source of information right at his fingertips, Pulido adds. "Your comics shop owner will give you more education than 15 other people," he says. "Ask him what's selling and what he'd like to see on the stands. The retailer knows what's going on." This becomes even more important in today's market, he notes. "We still call and talk to a lot of guys, both big and small. The market is changing every minute."

FINDING TALENT

Pulido and Hughes met after Pulido advertised in the *Comics Buyer's Guide* for an artist. "Steven was the 72nd person to respond," Pulido laughs. He saw something he liked in Hughes's work, went to Boston to meet him, and they've been together since. "In this field, it's hard to be a writer without an artist," he says. He suggests that beginners attend lots of conventions, see who's coming up, and connect with as many people as possible. "You can't replace the personal touch."

From the beginning, the two have worked with an agreement that spells out payments, rights, reprint fees, rights in other media, which other creators (inkers, colorists, etc.) have rights, and other key elements. The agreement for individual issues includes both deadline requirements and performance penalties if the deadline is missed, barring acts of God.

Pulido used money from his Eternity series to hire an attorney to craft an agreement, which has been supplemented since then. He suggests that new publishers search for and hire their own attorneys to draw up agreements for freelancers, and that they should also look at all the available types of agreements and pick out the parts that suit their individual publishing styles.

When starting up, he says, "I tried to rely on as many experts as possible who I didn't have to pay." Fortunately, his best friend is a financial analyst, and his brother-in-law is an entertainment lawyer. "Ask questions of anyone you know who can help you," he suggests. "You'd be surprised where you will find help."

The first requirement for establishing your rights, he notes, is to copyright and trademark your characters. For more details, see the article "TM & ©" in *Wizard* #43.

SETTING A BUDGET

Once your creative team is lined up, you have to determine costs. Key factors will include payments to talent (including inkers and colorists), overhead (including overnight mail services or faxes), phone bills, product listings in distributor catalogs, advertising and promotion, color separations, printing, shipping, and paper costs (the latter of which, incidentally, are currently skyrocketing).

The major area over which the self-publisher has control is color separations—because black-and-white publishing is an option. "We considered black-and-white for about five minutes," Pulido says. "We felt it was absolutely necessary to be in four-color to compete. Even now, black-and-white is tough." But that didn't stop *Bone* creator Jeff Smith or many others, he notes. "It's a gamble. Color enhances the marketability, but it costs a lot of money."

What to charge for your comic can't be looked up in a book,

either, he adds. "It's a tap dance. Obviously, you have to cover your costs and find your break-even point." Beyond that, he explains, it's a philosophical question of determining how high to go before too many readers resist.

> 5. Give yourself plenty of time for learning before you decide you have figure you've learned everything you need to know.

When Chaos! began, it was reasonable to expect a color book priced at $2.50 to break even selling about 20,000 copies, he says. Some self-publishers have told him their break-even point was lower; others have said it was twice that high. "There's always unknown stuff creeping in that costs money. You have to pad any budget to account for the things you haven't thought of."

SELECTING A PRINTER

Printing costs account for a major part of the budget. That expense, in turn, depends on the printer and its services. Pulido says there are two types of printers: Those that print comics for a living, and those that tell you that they *can* print comics.

Publishers should look at the total package being offered by the printer, he suggests. He also says that having all printing services combined in one house can decrease problems when starting out. The printing breaks down into three segments. The first is pre-press operations, which can include color separations. The second involves the quality of printing offered. The final one concerns shipping, which involves actually sending the finished printed comics to those parties who ordered them, whether it's by trucks or first-class mail. "Shipping ability is very important," Pulido says, as some printers don't understand the complications involved with shipping comics to the proper distribution locations, causing extreme problems, like missed ship dates, lost books, and inaccurate shipment numbers.

Pulido talked with approximately 15 vendors before selecting a printer, and he sometimes uses other printers for special jobs. For most publishers, the decision will come down to balancing a printer's experience against the price being offered. "In those cases, I vote for experience—then hammer them for price," he laughs.

If color separations are being handled by a different vendor, the publisher should have several firms each provide a few pages' worth of separations to test their quality. "It's a tough thing to do, because it costs money, and self-publishers don't have much," he admits. The need for such experimentation should be considered in the budget. "You need to build in room for a few failures."

DISTRIBUTORS

Being accepted into distributor catalogs, like Diamond Comics Distributors's *Previews* or Capital City Distributors's *Advance Comics*, comes next. "You have to show the distributors that you can produce a reasonable, quality product that can sell to their accounts and to readers, and you have to display that you can produce it on a consistent basis," Pulido says.

In Chaos!'s case, Pulido and Hughes had a head start due to their track record on their first mini-series. They also had more than two issues of the new series penciled before they decided to self-publish. Even then, they didn't solicit their first comic until seven months after they talked with distributors. Their promotional package included covers to the entire mini-series, penciled pages for the first three issues, and written background on their story approach and direction.

> 6. Accept the fact that you're going to make lots of mistakes, no matter how careful you are, and that your stress level will be in the stratosphere.

Pulido also suggests advertising in the major distributor catalogs, even if that's the only promotion that can be done. "Advertising when the book is coming out will support the retailers' efforts to sell it," he agrees. "But first, you need to showcase yourself to the retailers, because you don't have a base of readers."

FIGURE ON OVERPRINTING

Once distributor orders are in and you're ready to print your issue, Pulido suggests overprinting by at least 10 percent. "If you print to your orders, you're avoiding any risk, but you're also not investing in yourself," he points out. "It doesn't give you any way to grow your readership."

Overprinting ensures retailers can fill sales as interest grows. It also provides inventory for sending copies to the media, doing signings, going to conventions, and other promotions. "If you don't believe your comic can grow, who will?" he asks. Incremental print-

Tips from other self-publishers:

Terry Moore
***(Strangers In Paradise*, Abstract Studios):**

"Number one, be honest. Is your book really good? If not, nothing's going to work." He points out that "your popularity comes from the fans, but the orders come from the stores and the distributors. You need to get to know them very well and stay close to them. If they believe in you, they'll work with you and pull you along." He also suggests that new publishers focus on the book first and promotion second. "Going to cons won't make you a hot comic creator, but doing a great comic will."

Jeff Smith
***(Bone*, Cartoon Books):**

Smith has been asked for his secrets to success so often that he's created a Tip Sheet. His two key points: Know Your Market and Go to the Library. "A self-publisher's ability to find out facts and do his own research is critical," he says. His best decision was to keep the early issues in print, he adds. "If I hadn't done that, *Bone* never would have grown beyond the first 3,000 readers." Although he could afford color—and he thinks its absence holds down the size of his audience—he won't add it. "I grew up on comic strips, and I like black-and-white."

William Tucci
***(Shi*, Crusade Comics):**

"Be prepared for a lot of work, and be prepared for Murphy's Law. Don't rely on what other self-publishers tell you. Do as much research and work on your own as you can, because everyone's experience is different." You've also got to be honest about your own ability, he says. "If you're not the best at writing or drawing, get someone else to do that part."

Martin Wagner
***(Hepcats*, Double Diamond Press):**

"Create from the heart. Don't try to follow anyone else's lead or fill a niche. Start out with mini-comics, your college newspaper, a local city alternative paper, or even free copies you distribute at conventions—anything that puts you in the public arena and gets you feedback." Concerning finances, he suggests, "Pay attention to the business end closely. In my first three to four years, I needed to be more organized and more on track with what was coming in and going out." Finally, he stresses, "Be reliable, no matter what [your book's] frequency is. Fans will be loyal if you're there when they expect you to be. I've had to learn that myself."

Chris Crosby
***(Snap the Punk Turtle*, Super Crew Comics):**

"Take your promotional money and aim it directly at the retailers, not at the fans. You'll reach the fans by reaching the retailers." Also, he says, "One of the best things I've done is deliver my books on time. You've got to earn the trust of the fans and retailers."

James Owen
***(Starchild*, Taliesin Press):**

"Keep in mind that you are both the creative force and the marketing force. You have to budget your time to maintain your creative output while also doing the trade-show route. You have to get a bit ahead, because your output will taper off during convention season. I've tried working during shows, and I've never once gotten a line drawn in a hotel room."

ing prices make it relatively cheap to print another thousand copies or two at various abstract points, he adds.

SECOND PRINTINGS

Pulido doesn't favor second printings, preferring to publish trade paperback collections. His background comes from video and movies, which makes him lean toward doing mini-series with a break between each that offers an opportunity to collect the story in one volume. Others, like *Bone*'s Smith, prefer additional printings of early issues, which Pulido also thinks has validity. "It depends on your philosophy and approach to comics. I think many of these things can be done in a variety of ways."

ENHANCEMENTS

Well-known for using chromium and velvet covers, Pulido doesn't recommend them to everyone. "Enhancements without a good comic book don't mean jack," he says. "New publishers have to convince retailers and readers that they want to read the comic. Our cover enhancements worked for us, but ours were incredibly unique." He also points out that the added expense can dilute the desire to overprint. That happened with his own first chromium cover on *Lady Death* #1, which had to be printed to orders due to the high cost.

Self-publishing ain't all that bad—you get to play with cool markers and stuff!

SHIP ON TIME

A first issue isn't the end of the process, it's the beginning, Pulido stresses. "You need to establish a track record for being consistent. It's crucially important to have stuff in-house and ship on a reasonable schedule."

A monthly schedule makes the biggest impression, and bi-monthly is a good alternative, he says. Quarterly books have a harder time of keeping an audience, especially with continued stories. On the other hand, a monthly book means three issues will be ordered and printed before readers see the first issue.

"Being the entrepreneurial outlaw psychopaths that we are, we believed in going out with our guns blazing," he laughs. "That means that by the time the first issue came out, we had four issues in the can." In part, he notes, that was due to his "unique relationship" with Hughes. "We pooled our early fees to make sure we got it going well. It paid dividends down the road."

Pulido points to William Tucci's *Shi* as using a different successful strategy. Tucci published his first issue, then waited three months so that issue #2 was ordered as the first issue came out. But, Pulido warns, just be sure retailers know that gap will narrow with later issues.

LICENSING

"I don't go after licenses, licenses come to me," Pulido says. "Self-publishers should worry about making a good comic book first. The rest will follow." New publishers definitely don't want to be saddling retailers with products that they can't—or won't—sell, he points out. Even trading cards are "vastly more complicated" than comics, involving film, collation, and packing out. "I wouldn't recommend publishing trading cards, but I know people who are doing it," he says. "There are no rules that can't be broken."

MISTAKES

Any publisher who believes that it's all uphill after their first comic book comes out is fooling himself, Pulido says. "Success at one point doesn't guarantee success for the rest of your life," he states. "You're always on the diving board jumping. There's a certain momentum you can gain, but it doesn't get easier. Each issue is new, and new challenges develop as a company evolves."

Mistakes will happen, and the stress level will be high, he cautions. "The learning curve to get a first book out in six months is virtually vertical," he says. "You have to learn quickly, and you have to have 20 hours a day to devote to it. Forget about sleep, and take your vitamins. At some point, you're going to be faced with decisions that mean the whole ball of wax, and you're going to have to decide what to do. It means a lot of sleepless nights and judgment calls."

He also warns against manufacturing enthusiasm. "Readers know if you care about your comic book. They know if you're being honest or if you're faking it. They can smell it a mile away when it's not real. So you might as well be honest and do what you love." At Chaos!, he says, "we don't do comics for a living; we do comics to live. We love comic books. There isn't a cooler art form."

Pulido knows he hasn't been the voice of confident reassurance to new self-publishers. Even so, he hates to think he might discourage anyone completely. "If you're entering the market right now, you are completely insane," he says. "But more power to you. We broke the rules, and if I had it to do all over again, I would. So it's hard for me to say that others can't. If you have faith in your vision, you can succeed." ☆

Craig Shutt is a freelance writer based in Chicago, Ill.

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Wizard casts the *Gen*[13] movie!

Casting Call 4

Y'know, comic book fans would kill to see their favorite characters grace the silver screen. And since there seems to be more and more of these comic-related movies stuck in pre-production limbo, heck, we figgered we should take another stab at castin' these babies.

So, hey—Gen[13]'s pretty popular, right? So why not make it easy for those Hollywood jokers? The flick'd be directed by Phillip Noyce, who directed such screen gems as *Clear and Present Danger* and *Patriot Games*. And special FX would be handled by Industrial Light and Magic (of course). And the stars? Glad you asked...

FAIRCHILD
The *überbabe* of Gen[13] would be played perfectly by Lauren Holly from *Dumb and Dumber* and TV's *Picket Fences*.

BY A BUNCH OF *WIZARD* STAFFERS

GEN 13 and all characters and artwork shown ™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc. All photos: Everett Collection.

FREEFALL

Beverly Hills 90210's Tiffany-Amber Thiessen could easily play this valley girl.

BURNOUT

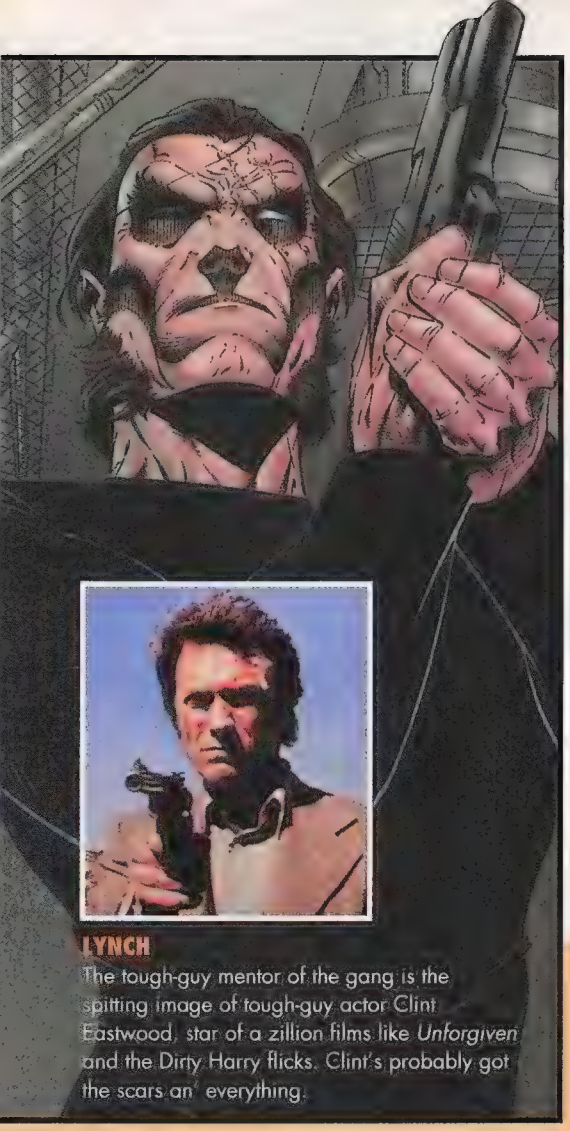
The resident fireball could be done some justice by Mark-Paul Gosselaar, known for his role as Zack in the TV show *Saved by the Bell*.

RAINMAKER

Casting Call semi-regular Tia Carrere of *True Lies* and *Wayne's World* would make a really cool Rainmaker.

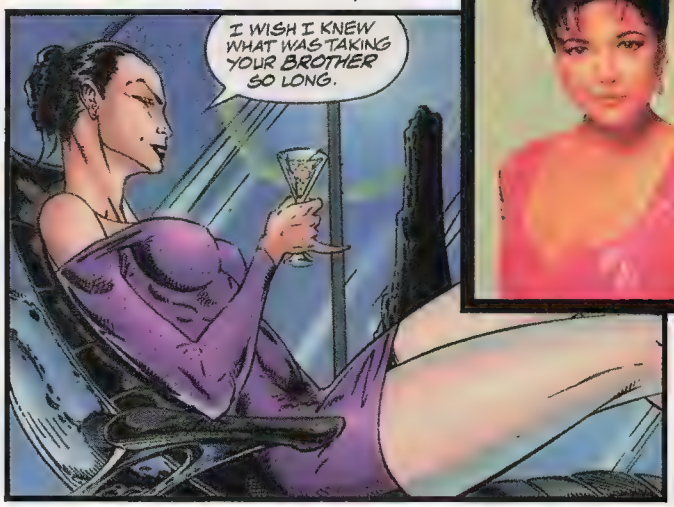
BRUNOT

This one proved so tough to cast that we asked *Gen13* artist J. Scott Campbell who he had in mind. His ideal guy? Jason Scott Lee of *The Jungle Book* and *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story*, although he'd have to bulk up a lot.

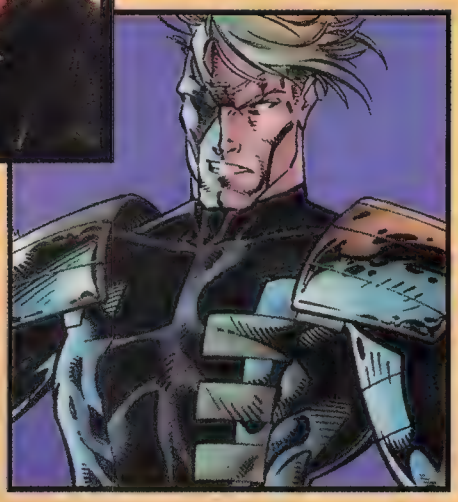


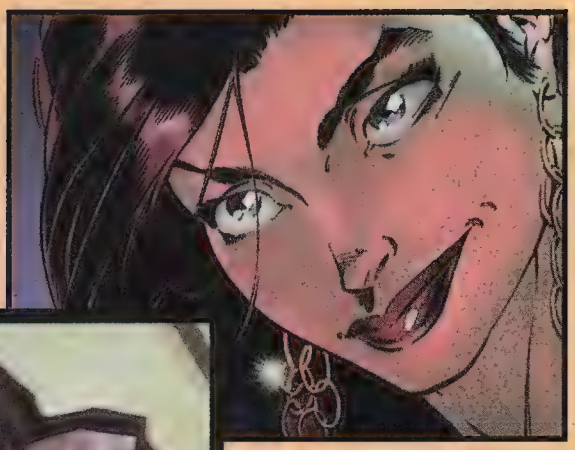
LYNCH
The tough-guy mentor of the gang is the spitting image of tough-guy actor Clint Eastwood, star of a zillion films like *Unforgiven* and the Dirty Harry flicks. Clint's probably got the scars an' everything.

IVANA BAIUL
Emma Samms, from the soaps *Dynasty*, *General Hospital*, and (ugh) *Models Inc.*, would play the diabolical director of International Operations.



MATT CALLAHAN/ THRESHOLD
The bratty brother of Bliss would be played to a T by Jack Noseworthy, who appeared in *The Brady Bunch Movie* and stars in MTV's *Dead at 21*.





NICOLE CALLAHAN/BLISS
Hailing from the TV show *Friends*, Courteney Cox is perfect for the manipulative Nicole.

And that'd do it. Now if we can get those Hollywood types to get offa their duffs and actually *do* something with this stroke of genius, they'd be rakin' in the dough! ☆

Only trusting each other as far as they can throw 'em, the Wizard staff members wonder if Galactus ever ate a planet that went down the wrong way.

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CONTEST

Thongs Are Good!

What's the only thing better than Lady Death? Yup, putting Lady Death in some sorta shoelace-resembling swimsuit, and that's what your job's gonna be, but first, here's what we're coughin' up for prizes:

Grand Prize (One winner)

One overly-hormoned youngster will have his or her submission professionally drawn by Lady Death artist Steven Hughes, and it will see print in the upcoming *Lady Death in Lingerie Special* coming in August (Hey!). We'll also hand this lucky person an original piece of framed Lady Death art by Steven Hughes, spotlighting the winner's original swimsuit design!

Second Prize (24 winners)

A copy of the *Lady Death II: Between Heaven and Hell* #1 Premium Edition signed by its creative team: creator/writer Brian Pulido, artist Steven Hughes, and colorist Jason Jensen.

Third Prize (10 winners)

One of those limited edition, extra special Lady Death beach towels, for a flood of Summer fun!

So what exactly do you haveta do to win that stuff? Simple. Just give us an original drawing of Lady Death in some hot swimsuit design, on a sheet of 8″ x 11 1/4″ unlined paper or posterboard. Remember, your art can be in any medium—oils, crayon, line art, ketchup, etc.—but neon inks just won't print.

Also, make sure your rendition is tasteful, 'cause any and all entries that the judges deem to be obscene will be immediately disqualified! (Of course, cool, non-obscene ones that make the male judges drool are definitely *in*!) And keep in mind that we're lookin' for original, creative, *different* pieces of art—not just beautiful ones!

One more important piece of info: **we need to receive your entry by no later than June 9, 1995!** That doesn't give you much time, so get movin' NOW!

When you're done with your masterpiece, fill out the official entry form below, attach it to the back of your artwork, and mail that bad boy off to:

Lady Death Swimsuit Contest
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

WIZARD®

CHAOS! COMICS

Don't fold, bend, or roll your artwork, and mail it flat to avoid damage. And this contest expires June 9, 1995, so sharpen your crayons and get designing today! The lovely Ms. Death (sigh) wishes all you artist zombies luck!

ENTRIES DUE BY JUNE 9, 1995!

LADY DEATH SWIMSUIT CONTEST

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

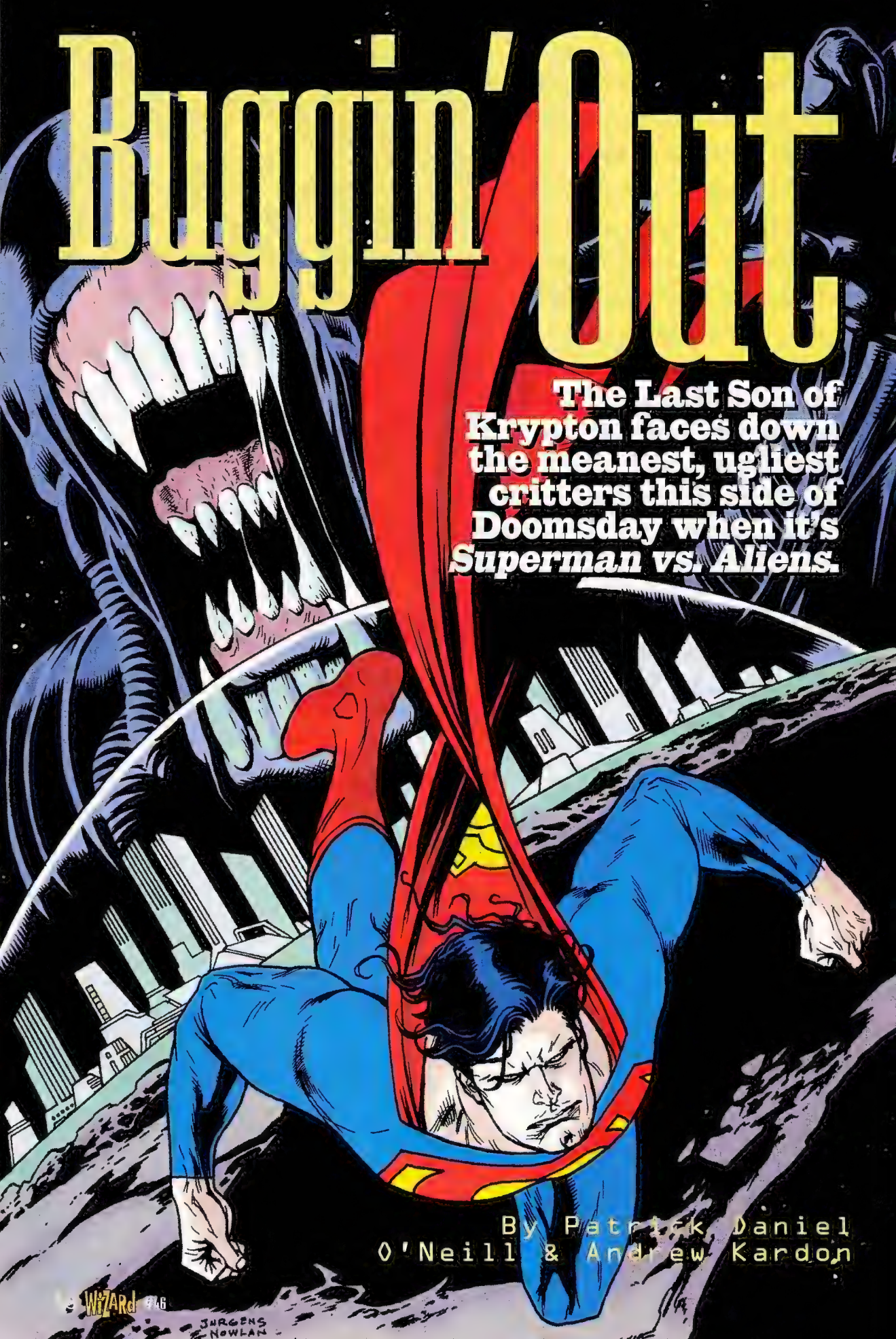
PHONE DATE OF BIRTH

LEGAL CRAP THAT NOBODY READS

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Chaos! Comics, their immediate families, and anybody who has enough free time to read this fine-print crap to see what stupid little jokes we stick in every month. Why would you care? Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card, and attach the form or card to the back of your art entry. Mail each entry to Lady Death Swimsuit Contest, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Any and all entries that the judges deem to be obscene will be automatically disqualified. Decision of the judges is final. You actually read this far to get to the second joke? Who do you think we're talking about when we say, "Too much free time"? **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 9, 1995—HURRY!!!** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Wizard Press and Steven Hughes will select the winners based on the creativity, originality, and quality of the submitted artwork. The judging will be conducted on June 10, 1995.

For a list of winners, available after July 14, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Lady Death Swimsuit Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

Lady Death ™ & © Brian Pulido



Buggin' Out

The Last Son of Krypton faces down the meanest, ugliest critters this side of Doomsday when it's *Superman vs. Aliens.*

By Patrick Daniel O'Neill & Andrew Kardon

"This all started about three years ago," explains writer-penciler Dan Jurgens about the three-issue, prestige format miniseries *Superman vs. Aliens*, co-produced by DC and Dark Horse Comics. "Superman editor Mike Carlin, DC direct market manager Bob Wayne, Dark Horse [publisher] Mike Richardson, and I were all in Sydney, Australia for a convention. We went to dinner one night and we started talking about pitting [DC's] Superman against [Dark Horse's] Aliens. It developed from there and it took me three years before I had the time to sit down and do the project."

So who's most likely to come out on top in this seemingly lopsided encounter, the long-haired Kryptonian or the hard-shelled Alien killers? "In any normal sense, you'd probably favor Superman to win this one," Jurgens admits. "With his powers and capabilities, as tough as the Aliens are, Superman is tougher.

"But one of the things you'll see in the course of the story is a shift in that ratio of power. Superman is more or less a solar battery; his body stores and processes solar energy to such a degree that he has superpowers. The story will take place far away from Earth, far away from a sun—where Superman's powers are not just depleted, but are leaving him [weaker and weaker] over time. So Superman is much more a normal human being as this proceeds than he is a superpowered Kryptonian."

From Krypton With Love

The story opens a whole new world to the supposed Last Son of Krypton. As Jurgens explains it, the crossover story begins when a LexCorp satellite picks up signals from a probe coming towards Earth. As part of a good will effort—now that owner Lex Luthor is gone—the company invites Clark Kent and Lois Lane to cover the event just as the probe crashes into the ocean. When Clark puts on a pair of headphones and listens to the garbled signals coming from the probe he realizes they are Kryptonian. After a quick change, Superman retrieves the satellite from the ocean's depths and discovers Kryptonian markings on it. They tell the story of a planet about to explode. Scientists had built a dome over a city called Argo, which was blown into outer space—intact. With all the clues pointing towards other survivors of Krypton, Superman quickly takes off for Argo.

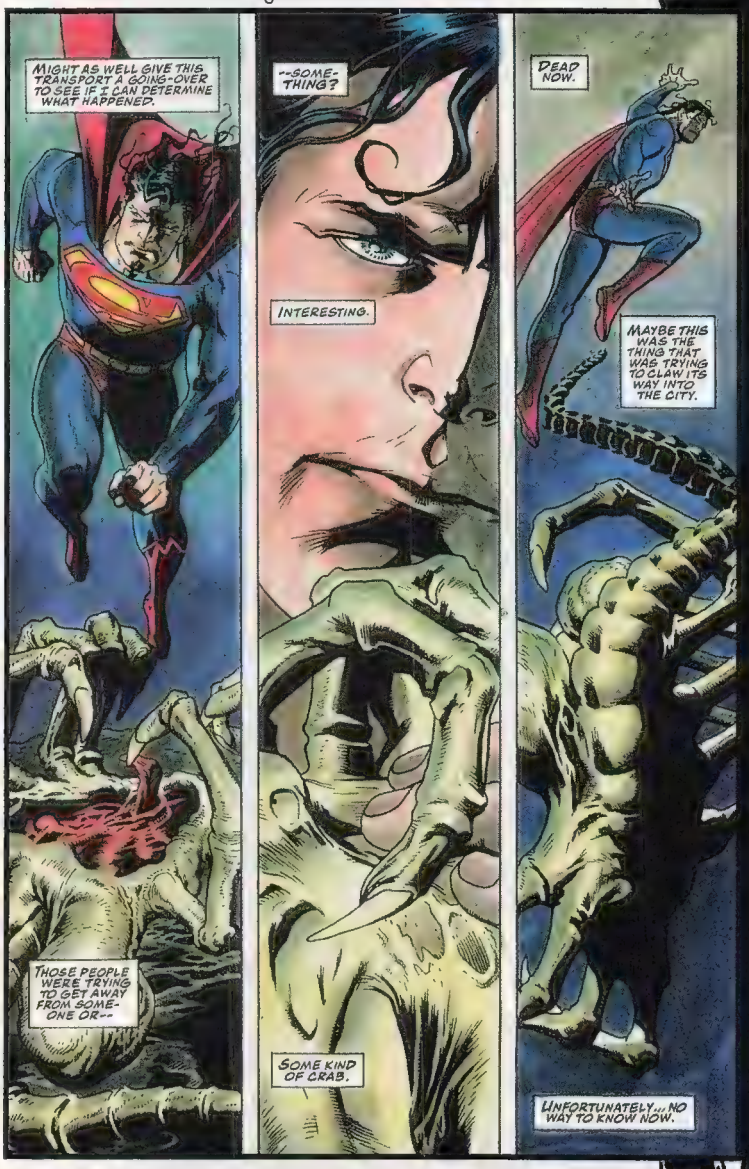
"When he gets there, as far as Superman's concerned, he is the last Kryptonian. There is a particular young girl that Superman finds in the city of Argo, a young blonde girl named Kara. This is someone he comes across who speaks Kryptonian. She also has the same sort of cultural background—and the architecture [of Argo] is all the same. So right away, there's this connection made between the two characters. I think it is that character play that will make this interesting and enrich the entire tapestry of the story. They build a stronger connection where he takes on sort of a protector role, but it's one that she reverses when she becomes his protector, too. And that's part of Superman's code against killing."

And he recalls a story by writer-artist John Byrne where Superman found three surviving Kryptonians in a separate pocket universe, and executed them for destroying the human race. "Ever since then, he refuses to kill. Kara doesn't quite understand that. So there's sort of a dual protector role that develops between them, and sort of a family relationship."

With it being an established part of the Aliens history that the only way to defeat one is to kill it, Superman will have to rethink his motives. After all, the biggest part of Superman's moral code is his stringent rule against killing sentient life—a rule he's only broken once and has regretted ever since. "He spent a year in exile in space because of that," says Jurgens. "But he came back and knew that he had to be better than anyone else. Dealing with Superman's code against killing is a significant part of the story. In his mind, he sees these aliens as sentient beings, so he has some objection to killing them."

Plus, the environment he's in doesn't help him out any, notes Jurgens. "Argo's natural resources are gone, its stored supplies are dwindling, society has fallen apart; they need help, they need rescue. Superman has to go there. It's quite a ways away, so he has to take a ship. He thinks he's going to find more Kryptonians. What would that mean if he brought more Kryptonians back to Earth? Maybe some would be as good as him; maybe some wouldn't. He's met some bad guy Kryptonians and he's had to kill three of them. So right from the start we're bringing up the code against killing."

Having Superman battle—and even kill—aliens from outer space may seem somewhat repetitive, however, following his battle with Doomsday. "One of the toughest problems has been having the climax not seem like a rehash of the Superman/Doomsday battle," Jurgens points out. "What you have to do—to make it interesting—is wrap it with characters that make the situation itself more interesting."



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Dark Horse's liaison to the project, editor Michael Eury, sees the differences between this encounter and the famous Doomsday battle in the very nature of the Aliens. "The Aliens are more than just villains that you insert into a storyline to fulfill a certain need," he says.

"They have a history; there are a lot of rules and particulars that are specific to the characters that you don't find attached to many other characters. A lot more science is involved in this than in something like Doomsday. Doomsday was created as an adversary for Superman, whereas the Aliens have existed quite successfully on their own in their own continuity."

Also, the Aliens are, well, *alien* to Superman: he knows nothing about them. "You'll see the Aliens in all their stages," Jurgens notes. "Remember [in the first movie where] they find the skin of the face-hugger and they think it's dead? Superman does the same thing. He finds one, picks it up, and says, 'This is nothing,' and tosses it aside. That's part of the fun and the mystique of the Aliens."

Shining Through

Superman's very image is one of bright primary colors and heroic poses. In the past, the Aliens have always existed in a sort of bleak techno-gothic environment. Jurgens says making the Man of Steel work in the grunge of the Aliens' world was one of the challenges of the project. "Making Superman work visually in the typical Aliens environment is something we talked a great deal about," he recalls. "Even Mike Richardson expressed concern about that three years ago—will Superman look absolutely silly sticking out against that sort of backdrop? I've taken that and made it part of the theme of the story itself. Right from the very first cover, Superman will be virtually the only color to really shine in this entire series. When he first appears, it's in all his regal-like power and glory—Superman is a majestic character, very bright and shiny."

"That's the thing that makes this fight interesting—the dichotomy of the characters," Eury interjects. "Superman is this shining knight who represents all the good things, while the Aliens are dark and brooding and frightening. It is a clash of styles, but that's the interesting thing.

"It also makes the Aliens creepier to have them in a shiny, more utopian environment. We're used to them sort of slithering out of the shadows, but here you can see them more; they're in an area they maybe shouldn't be in and it makes them even more repulsive and disgusting."

But the Man of Steel will not always stick out like a guiding light. "He will journey to Argo," explains Jurgens, "which is a rundown shambles of a place by this point. And, as his powers wane, so will the brightness and the shininess of Superman's costume. The backdrop of good storytelling is when the characters' physical appearances reflect what's happening in the story.

And many longtime Jurgens fans will note that the art in *Superman/Aliens* bears striking little resemblance to his usual work. There is good reason for this.

"When we put this together," notes Jurgens, "we were talking about different inkers. I suggested Kevin Nowlan and thought that what we wanted to have was a book that did look and feel different from the typical Superman comic book, because of the nature of the Aliens and the art direction.

"We wanted to mix a sort of superhero artist," says Jurgens referring to himself, "with someone who is incredibly capable with light and shadow, like Kevin is, and get this thing working together. And I think we pulled it off. And on top of that, Greg Wright is going to color this and carry it that step farther.

"I think it reads differently than a typical Superman comic book; I think it looks appropriately different. So, I think its a real strong project." ☆

Wizard Contributing Editor Patrick Daniel O'Neill, resides in the dome-covered city of Staten Island, New York—just in case. Copy Editor Andrew Kardon does not.

COMING UP FOR AIR

Tom Grummett is jumping off the treadmill. Having agreed to pencil the new *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* quarterly, he left *Robin* with issue #15 to focus on the monthly *Superboy* comic and his new book.

"I did two books a month for three years," he explains. "For a while, that's fun. But after that, it's a treadmill. The older I get, the tougher it can be to maintain that level."

The spry 35-year-old, who lives in Saskatchewan, Canada, entered mainstream comics in 1989, handling fill-in jobs for DC Comics. His artistic career includes work on DC's *The New Titans, Action Comics, The Adventures of Superman*, and the two hit teen books, *Robin* and *Superboy*.

Drawing two characters with the same chest emblem won't bore him, Grummett asserts. "I see Superboy as a primal sort of Superman," he explains. "He's more the way Superman was back in the 1940s, when he was wise-cracking with villains and his powers were less developed. I envision this Superboy as what would have happened if [Superman creators Jerry] Siegel and [Joe] Schuster had created Superman in the 1990s."

Grummett's work on Superman will appear four times a year, during the four "off weeks" when none of the four monthly Super-books ship. "It takes place in continuity, so if we enter any long storylines, *Man of Tomorrow* will be plugging into what's going on," he explains. "But being a quarterly, it probably will be more self-contained and check in on the supporting characters less frequently. Or at least that's our plan now."

—Craig Shutt

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JAMES ROBINSON • BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH

WILDSTORM RISING™ PART 1

Power is the Key

Cover by Barry Windsor-Smith

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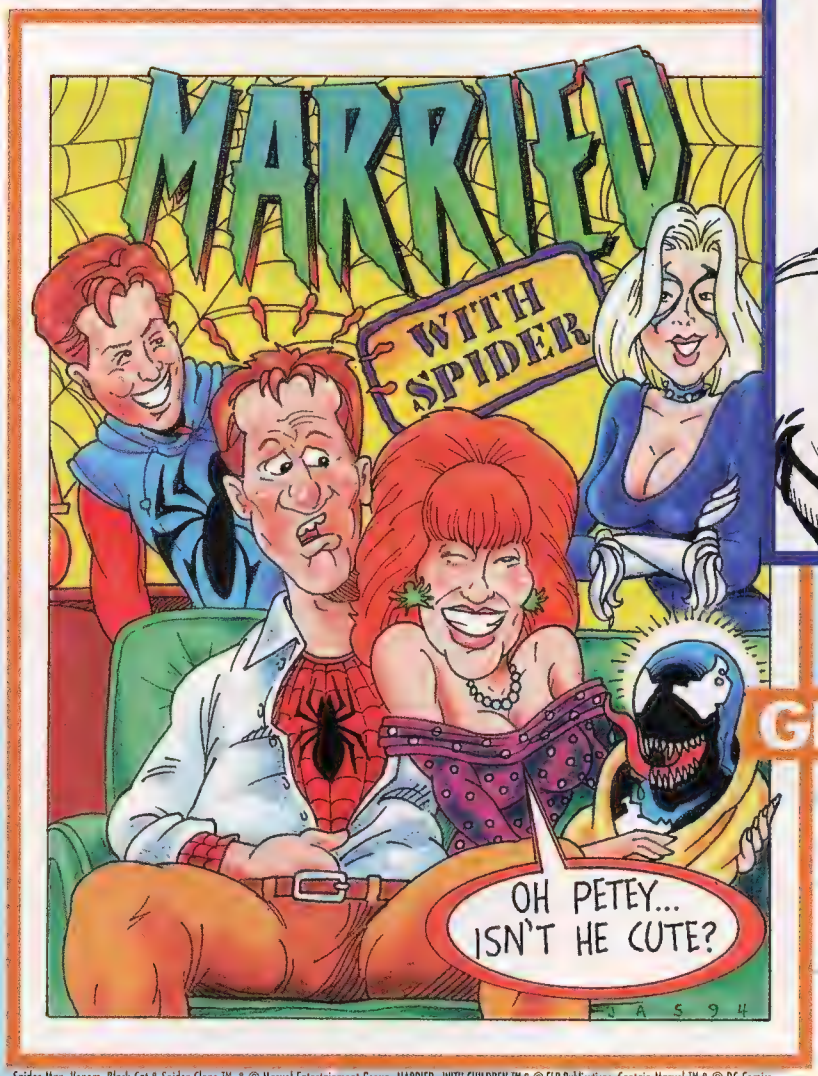
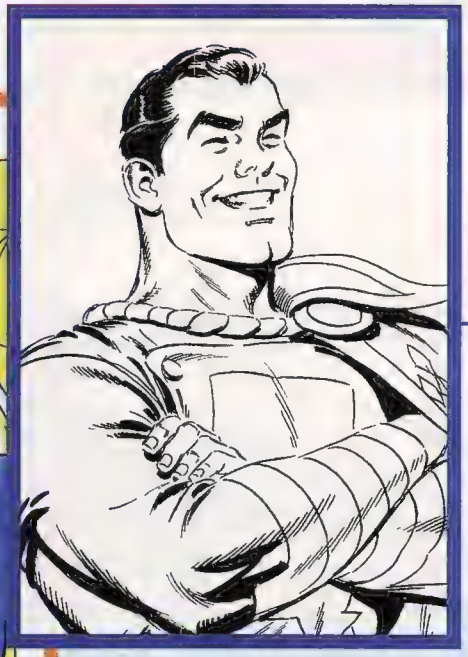
WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS Image

the Drawing board

The 10 people whose artwork got an honorable mention this month will each receive an *X-Men* (vol. 2) #36 signed by Andy Kubert and a *Gambit and the X-Ternals* #1 signed by Fabian Nicieza. The four runners-up will each receive an *Amazing X-Men* #1 signed by Andy Kubert, a *Robin* #1 signed by Tom Grummett, and a *Violator* #1 signed by Bart Sears. The artist of the winning entry this month will receive all that stuff, plus an incredible, original piece of Captain Marvel/Shazam! art by Jerry Ordway (thanks a billion, Jerry)! Congrats to all!

The showcase of comic book fan art.





GRAND PRIZE

MARRIED...WITH SPIDER
By Jas Ingram
Stockbridge, GA

Spider-Man, Venom, Black Cat & Spider-Clone ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. MARRIED...WITH CHILDREN ™ & © ELP Publications. Captain Marvel ™ & © DC Comics.

RUNNER-UP

SPAWN
By Chris O'Brien
Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada

Spawn is a registered trademark of Todd McFarlane Productions. Spawn © Todd McFarlane Productions.

RUNNER-UP

JUDGE DREDD vs. LOBO
By Richard A. Van Dongen Jr.
Newark, NY

Judge Dredd ™ & © Egmont Foundation. Lobo ™ & © DC Comics.

RUNNER-UP

ALIEN BONES
By Jack Gray
Denver, CO

Bone ™ & © Jeff Smith. Aliens ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox.

RUNNER-UP

GRENDEL-PRIME
By Lawrence E. Jones
San Francisco, CA

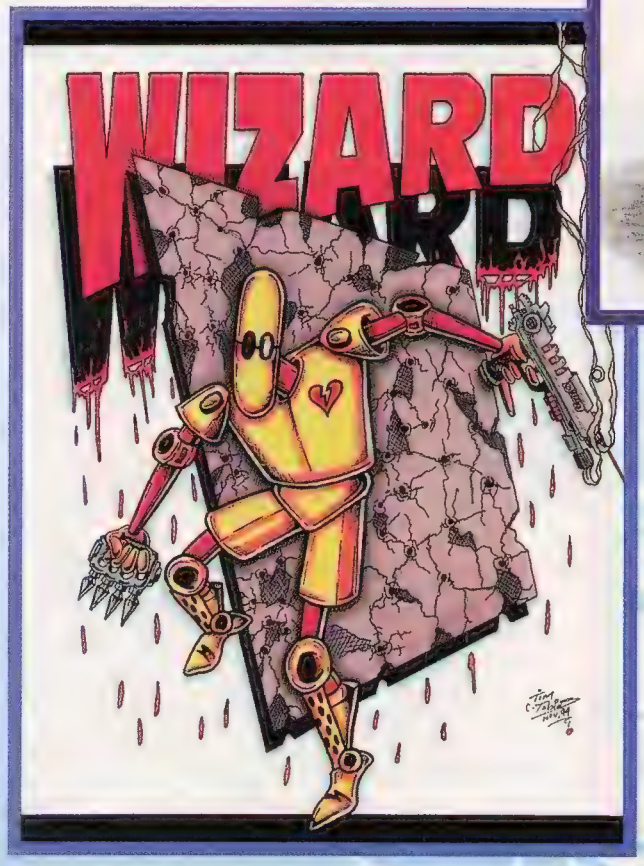
Grendel ™ & © Matt Wagner

CYBLADE
By Aaron Barrera Jr.
Greeley, CO

Cyblade ™ & © Top Cow Productions

THE INCREDIBLE BULK
By Tim Waddell
San Mateo, CA

Homer Simpson ™ & © Matt Groening, Hulk ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.



SCUD, THE DISPOSABLE ASSASSIN
By Tim Tobias
San Diego, CA

Scud, The Disposable Assassin ™ & © Rob Schrab

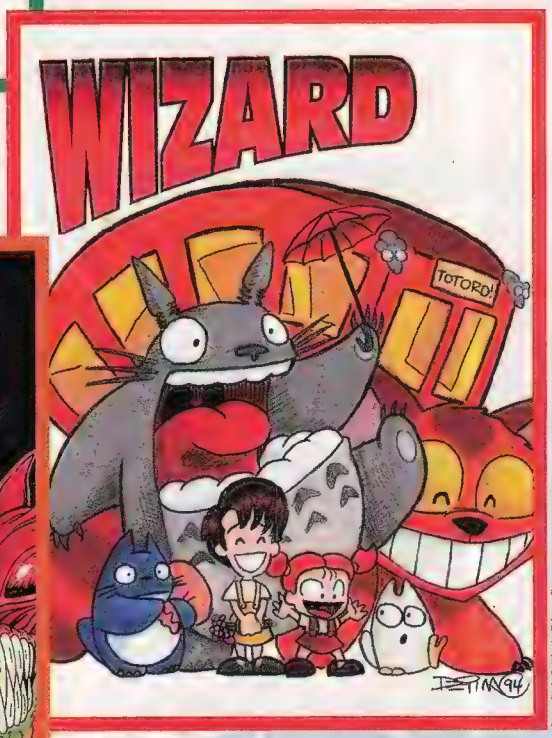
PRISAR
By Arturo Velasquez
Allston, MA

Prisar ™ & © BIG Entertainment, Inc.

GAMBIT, ROGUE & SABRETOOTH
By Eri Gaudiamo
Indonesia

Gambit, Rogue, & Sabretooth ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

TOTORO
By Peter DeTina
British Columbia, Canada



Totoro ™ & © Nibariki/Tokuma Shoten

Guyver ™ & © Yoshiki Takaya & Tokuma Shoten

GUYVER
By Richard A. Van Dongen Jr.
Newark, NY

CADILLACS & DINOSAURS
By Thomas S. Coby
Cincinnati, OH

CADILLACS AND DINOSAURS™ & © Mark Schultz

SHANNA
By Daniel Rodriguez
Ft. Worth, TX
(Hey, Daniel! Please send us your full address so we can send the goodies to you!)

Shanna ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

X
By Todd Michael Lewek
Greendale, WI

X ™ & © Dark Horse Comics

Entries for The Drawing Board should be sent to:
The Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, bloody finger, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11-1/4". Do not fold, bend, or roll artwork. Mail flat to avoid damage. Please enclose your name and full address. All entries are nonreturnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Good luck!

Greg Capullo's

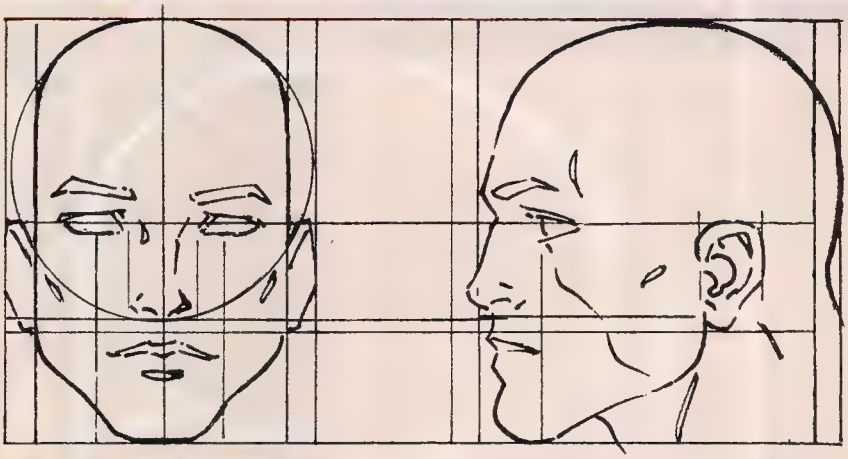
KRASH COURSE

FACE FACTS!

Welcome to Krash Course, all you future comic gods. My name is Greg Capullo, one-half of the dynamic duo—namely Todd McFarlane and myself—who comprise the *Spawn* art team. I have designed this course to give you all the weapons you'll need in order to draw your own bombastic comic books.

To do that we must start with the basics. Repeat after me: "Basics. The better ya know 'em, the better you'll be." The best way to learn the basics is to get your sketch pads out and start drawing from life and/or photos. Now I know there are a lot of hotshots out there who say, "I don't need to learn the basics or draw from life because I draw from imagination and have a stylized approach." That's capital B.S.! It's just a cop-out the lightweights use who ain't got what it takes to get 'em down. So all you hotshots, pay attention and watch closely 'cause I'm gonna make your drawings more powerful no matter what your drawing style is.

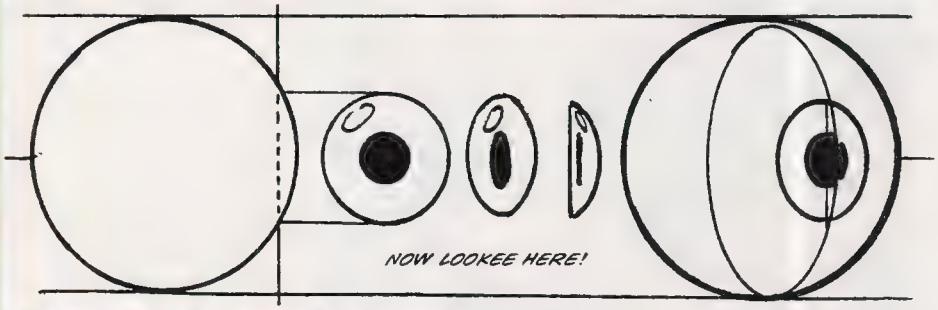
For the first lesson, I chose to discuss the human head and its features, being that it's the first thing you see when you look at a person. Now, I don't want to bore you with rules and regulations because drawing should always be fun.



1. the ideal head

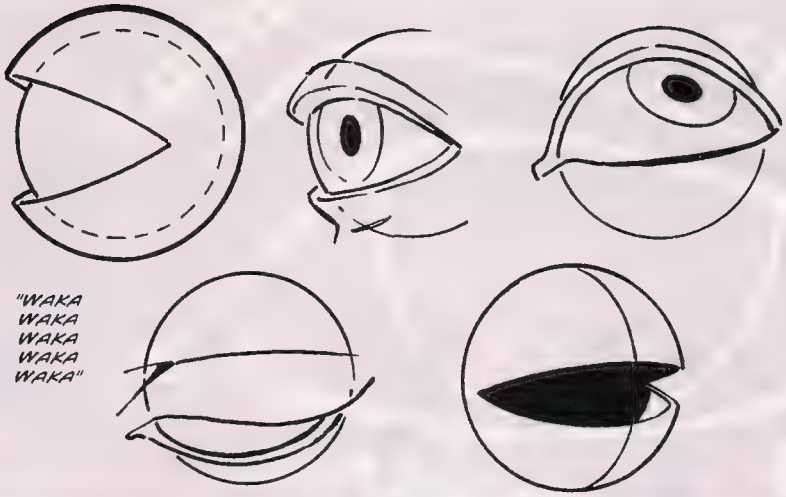
So, let's look at our first illustration. This is an ideally constructed head. I've used a set of guide lines to show you how to set up a head of your own. Notice in the frontal view, if you divide the head in half horizontally you've found the eye line. Five eye lengths is the width of the head. Take a close look at the eyes—between them is the length of one eye, and the distance from each eye to the edge of each ear is also one eye length. Now, if we divide the space from the eyes to the chin in half, slightly above that line would be the base of the nose. Dividing the space from the bottom of the nose to the chin in thirds will show you where the mouth goes. Place it at the base line on the first third from the nose.

Note the front view of the vertical lines that I've drawn. They demonstrate how the features relate to each other. The side view of the head fits roughly within a square. Notice how the vertical line I dropped from the inside corner of they eye is equal to the horizontal line that runs from the outside corner of the eye to the back of the ear. Use this guideline to properly place the ear.



2. eyeballs aren't round

Now let's take a look at the individual features beginning with the eye. I'll bet you think the eyeball is perfectly round, right? WRONG! Let's try an experiment. Close your eyes and place a finger on each of your lids. You'll be able to feel a slightly raised spot if you move your eyes around. What you're feeling is the eye lens. See how I cut away a section of the eyeball indicated by the broken line? This is the flat spot where you plop the lens. The pupil (the black dot of your eye) is located on that flat area. That's why the pupil appears as an ellipse when viewing the eye from any angle other than straight on.

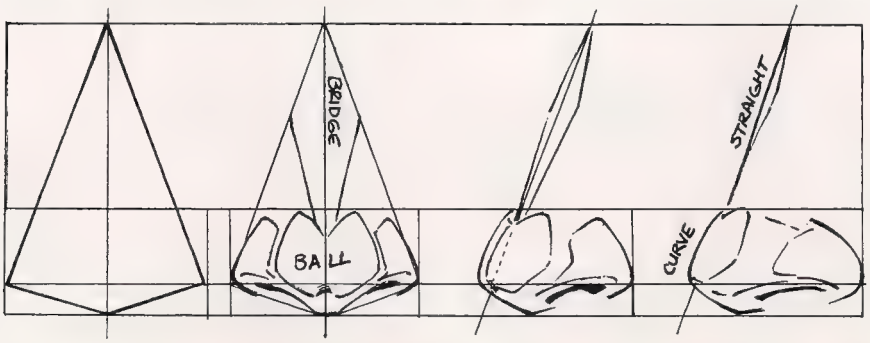


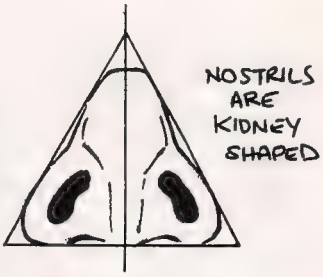
3. pac-man

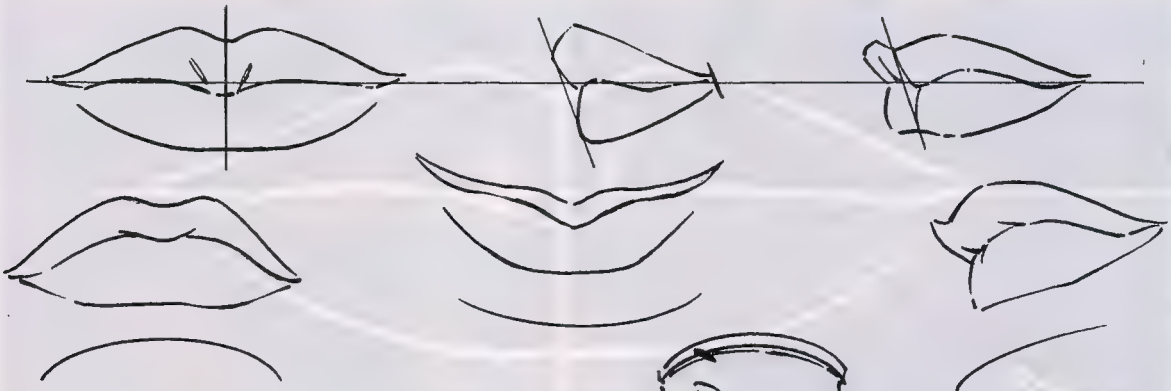
The easiest way to understand the eyelid is to imagine a Pac-Man (remember that video game?) gobbling up an eyeball. Though the eyelid is shaped a bit differently, the idea is the same. So study the contours of the lid and remember to give the lid thickness and you'll be all set.

4. the nose is a piece of cake

The nose is a piece of cake. If you can draw a triangle, you can draw a nose. Try to keep the bridge of the nose fairly straight and note how it interlocks with the ball of the nose. As you can see, even in the up-shot, the triangle remains the dominant form. Simple or what?

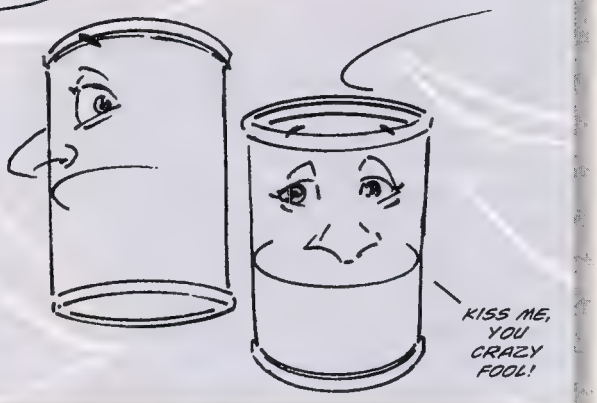






5. can it!

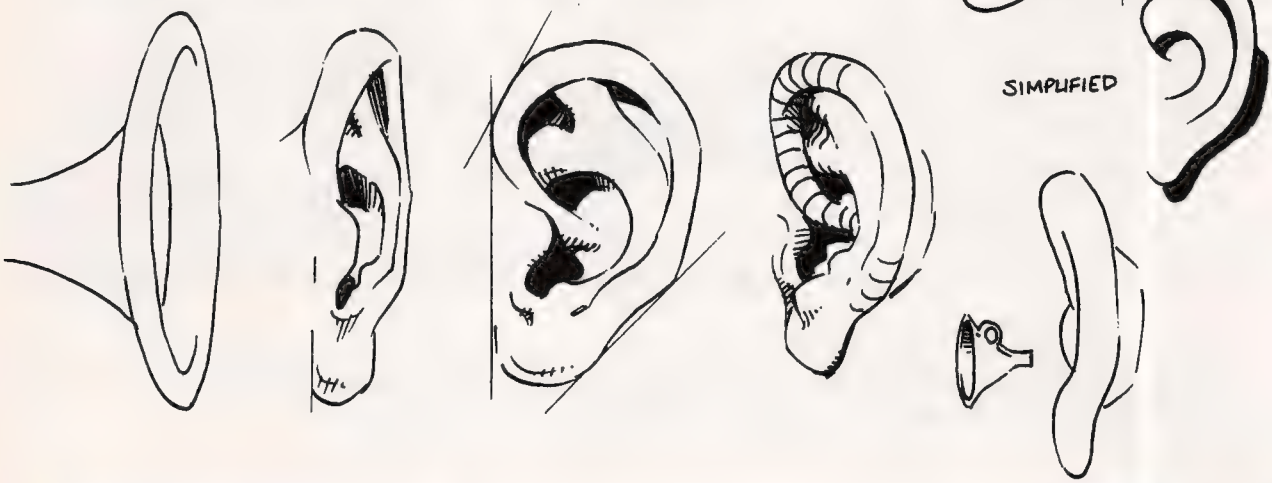
Now for the curvy thing called the mouth. There are two things to remember when drawing the mouth. First, make sure that the top lip doesn't protrude too far past the lower lip. If you do this, your character will look geeky. The second thing to remember is that the mouth itself is built on a curve. Remember that the face, unlike the top of you kid sister's head, is not flat. The cartoon cans should help you understand what I mean.

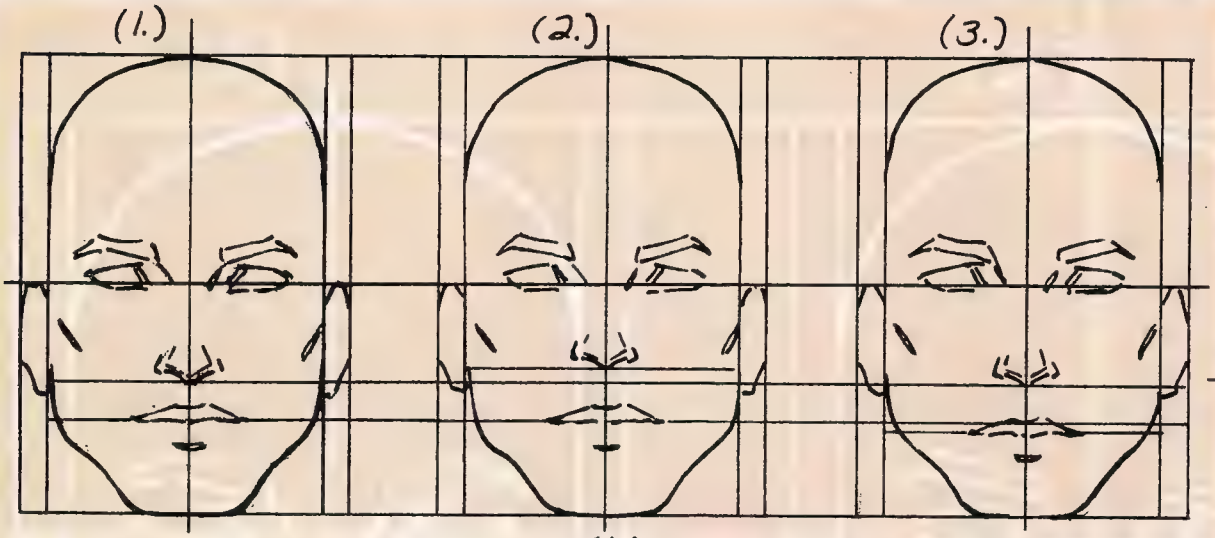


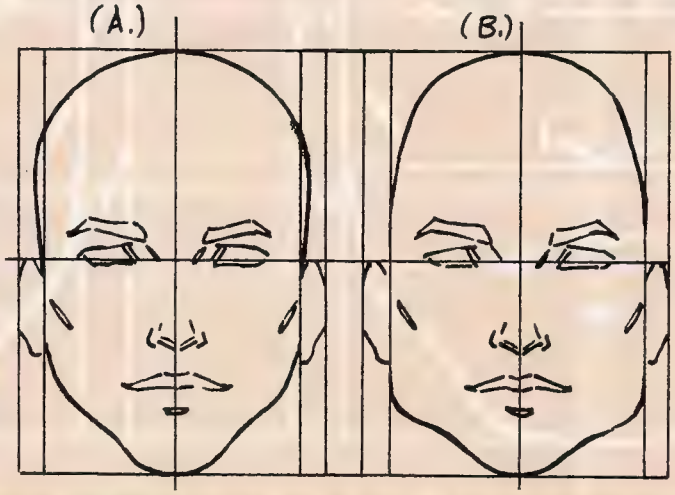
KRASH COURSE and all related text, artwork, and characters ™ & © Greg Capullo.

6. now hear this

The ear is a bit trickier. It's made of bits of cartilage that interlock with each other; some pieces even hide behind others. The basic overall shape is that of a kidney. To help you understand the complexity of the ear (it ain't so tough once ya get the hang of it) try taking your finger while looking at my drawing and locating on your own ear what you're looking at. (CAUTION!!! Be careful not to wander too deeply in your ear because you wouldn't want to get sticky brown ear wax all over your brand new *Wizard*.) That concludes our look at the features. Hopefully, all you lightweights managed to hang in there with the tough guys.







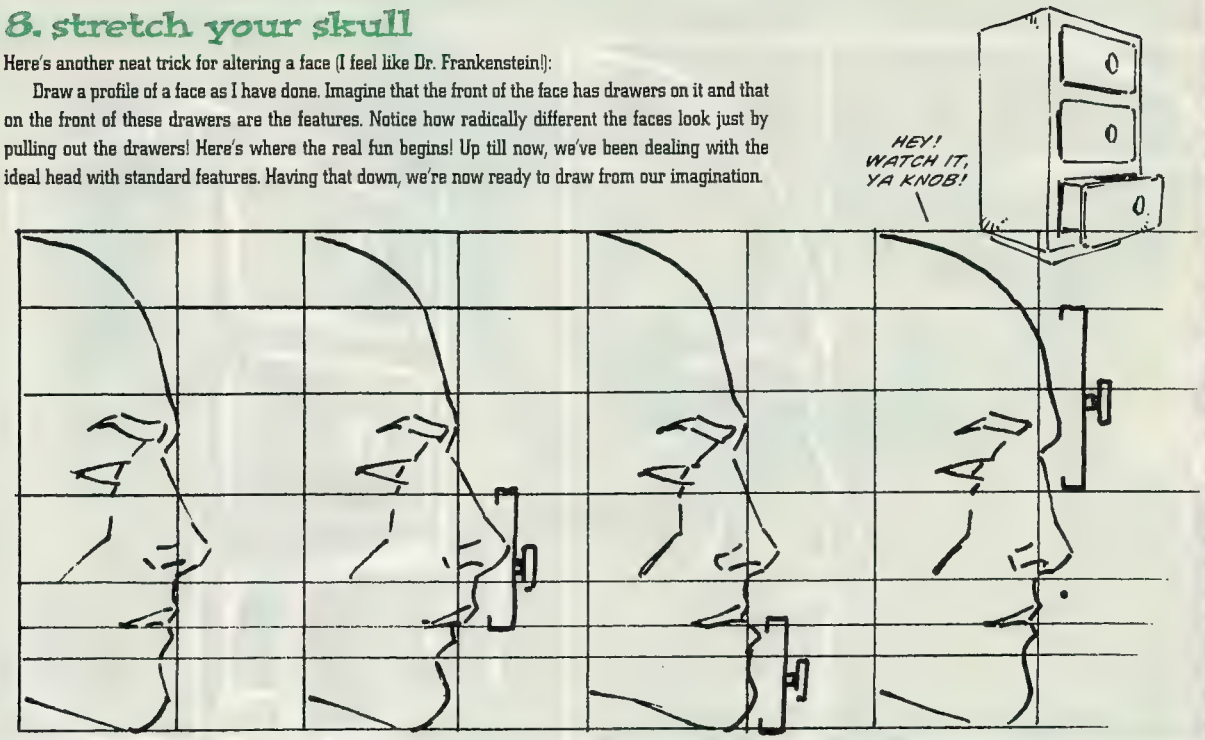
7. changing features

Now let's play a little game. We'll start with an ideal head and move the features around to see what happens. Head #1 is proportioned correctly. With Head #2, the nose has been raised slightly. On Head #3 the mouth was lowered slightly. Notice how very different all three faces look with only slight changes being made. You can also move the eyes closer together or farther apart, as well as up or down. In fact, move the features in any combination and direction that you like. In illustrations A and B, I proportioned the features correctly, but altered the shape of the head. See again how differently the heads look? Just imagine how many different characters you can get by altering head shapes and feature placements together!

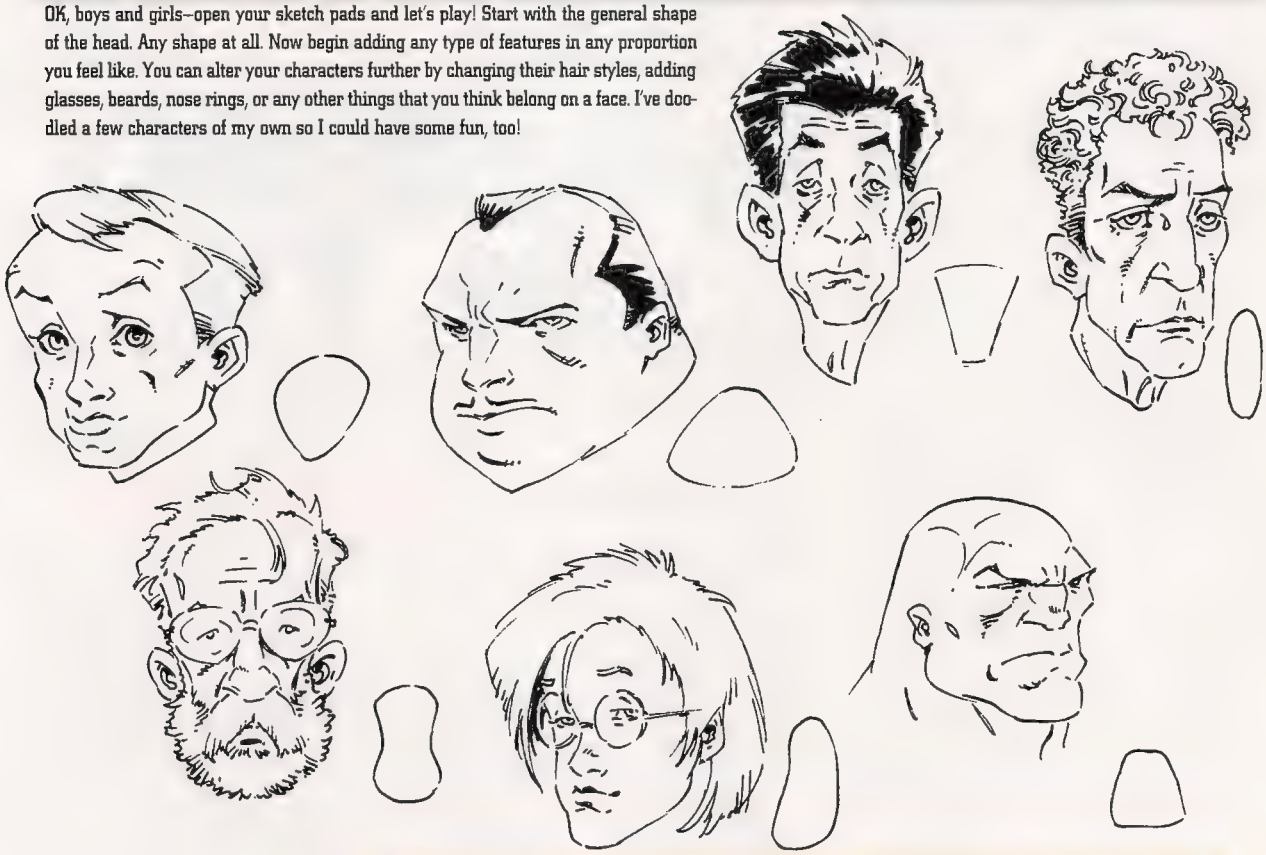
8. stretch your skull

Here's another neat trick for altering a face (I feel like Dr. Frankenstein!):

Draw a profile of a face as I have done. Imagine that the front of the face has drawers on it and that on the front of these drawers are the features. Notice how radically different the faces look just by pulling out the drawers! Here's where the real fun begins! Up till now, we've been dealing with the ideal head with standard features. Having that down, we're now ready to draw from our imagination.



OK, boys and girls—open your sketch pads and let's play! Start with the general shape of the head. Any shape at all. Now begin adding any type of features in any proportion you feel like. You can alter your characters further by changing their hair styles, adding glasses, beards, nose rings, or any other things that you think belong on a face. I've doodled a few characters of my own so I could have some fun, too!



This concludes the first Krash Course. I hope I've begun to prove that a strong foundation in the basics will enhance your drawings, making them much more powerful and convincing. Understand that structure must be both understood and present no matter what your style is. Next month's column will be "Vicious Anatomy." Till then, keep the lead burning, tough guys. ☆

The comic insider's guide to Hollywood.

A first look at the Cyberforce animation stills, from the upcoming TV series.

CyBeRFoRCe on tv

A deal has been signed for Marc Silvestri's *Cyberforce* to hit the FOX Children's Network as either a mid-season replacement show or in time for the '96-'97 season, Top Cow Productions, Inc. has announced. Animation will be produced in conjunction with Graz Entertainment (*X-Men*, *The Tick*). "We will be utilizing animation studios in Japan," said Silvestri, "along with the latest computer-generated animation techniques." It is also reported that *Cyberforce* has been optioned as a motion picture at 20th Century Fox. This follows Silvestri's recent announcement that he is taking a hiatus from comics to work on undisclosed projects. Inside sources suggest FOX-TV has approached Silvestri to develop an original animated series to pair up with *Cyberforce*. Another FOX source has confirmed that Silvestri is developing a prime-time TV series for the network. The specifics of the project are hazy; one source believes the project to be *Weapon Zero*, an original creation that Marc has been showing to motion picture companies during the past year. A second source says it is called *The Darkness*. Top Cow Productions, Inc. spokesperson Nicole Merke had no official comment, except to say that Silvestri will be examining new properties for Top Cow.

—Dave Galvan

WildStoRm Productions Projects

Good news and bad news on the WildStorm Productions front. CBS announced that Jim Lee's Saturday morning cartoon *WildC.A.T.s* won't be renewed, while the *Gen*[13] animated feature film is due to arrive in early 1996, written by Kevin Altieri, formerly of *Batman: The Animated Series*, and Brandon Choi. And the difference between *WildC.A.T.s* and the upcoming *Gen*[13] film? "We have complete control over our comics, and after being involved in licensing and adapting of our material," says Jim Lee, "we decided that if we were going to do another project, we would certainly try to maintain as much control over it."

—D.G.

FoX fALL is Set To go

The FOX Kids Network has announced its line-up for next season. *Spider-Man*, *The Tick*, and *X-Men* have all been picked up for next season, and the remaining five episodes of *The Adventures of Batman and Robin* will be shown. With all this in tow, it appears that Warner Brothers has made some internal rumblings about the afterlife of the Bat-toon. Some sources have indicated that executives inside the studio want to produce several more episodes. This appears to be a long shot, since the show has been out of production for some time, and key players from the series have gone to other projects. In September, the show will return to its original weekday slot, and will pre-

Stryker, Ripclaw, and Velocity ™ & © Top Cow Productions

sent the five never-before-seen episodes, afterwards going back to reruns.

Other stories out of Warner Brothers include the state of the *Superman* animated series. While there is evidence recently stated that the project has been put on hold until a planned John Waters-produced Superman film is made (and it might never be made), *Batman and Robin* producer Bruce Timm recently confirmed that he is developing the animated series project.

—D.G.

Delgado Vs. Godzilla

Stan Winston may wind up getting the lion's share of the credit when the currently-on-hiatus *Godzilla* movie fires up again. But Ricardo Delgado, the first designer to take a crack at the monster, feels any final design will have his fingerprints all over it.

"Stan's people had their own version of the creature," declares Delgado, "but a lot of the early design principles I came up with ended up being at least partially incorporated into their version of it."

Delgado, whose comic book "alter ego" has created the two highly successful *Age of Reptiles* mini-series for Dark Horse, is presently working out of Amblin Studios, designing aliens for the upcoming film treatment of Malibu Comics's *The Men in Black*, directed by Barry Sonnenfeld (*Addams Family Values*).

Delgado, a Los Angeles native whose other credits include the movies *True Lies* and the upcoming *Strange Days*, and the TV series *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, is fine with his role in the early development stages of *Godzilla* that helped secure the go-ahead from Toho (which owns the rights to *Godzilla*), and is not bitter about Winston stepping in. He came onto *Godzilla* in August of '94 and stayed until late November when Winston joined the team. During that period, Delgado's early sketches and sculpture pointed toward a distinct and highly familiar take on everybody's favorite monster in the rubber suit.

"My approach to creating *Godzilla* borrowed a lot from the monster in the suit," he says, straight-faced. "It had the same head shape and tail structure. The creature I designed had some Saurian elements to it, but does not look like the T-Rex from *Jurassic Park*. For Godzilla to work, you had to look at Godzilla and see the creature you grew up with."

Delgado, while not privy to all the particulars of production shutting down and director Jan De Bont (*Speed*) leaving the project, reports that the studio is redeveloping the film. "They felt it was too expensive to be made in the current form. The script I read was very ambitious and very cool. The studio wanted to retain as many of those cool elements as possible and still be able to bring the film in for a reasonable budget."

—Marc Shapiro

Several creators have "designs" on getting their work into the Godzilla film.

SUPERMAN ™ & © DC Comics. GODZILLA ™ & © Toho Co. Ltd.

More Kirk, Anyone?

Is it really "Kirk out"? Although James T. Kirk went to that happy space station in the sky when he died in *Star Trek: Generations*, he might not be dead with a capital D. Said William Shatner, "In space, death is a relative thing. You know how we have these tricky little ways of turning back time and entering vortexes. Anyway, I suggested that Kirk shouldn't really be dead. He should just call *Rescue 911*." Shatner admits, "When I was first presented with the idea of Kirk dying in *Generations*, I thought it was a good idea. But as the time came closer to knocking him off, I got really depressed about it. I wouldn't be against doing another *Star Trek* film if we could work out the details."

As *Generations*, which combined Kirk of the classic *Trek* show with Picard of *The Next Generation*, has grossed some $70 million at the box office, expect to see *Star Trek VIII*, *IX*, and *X*. Until then, you can catch Shatner on his TV series *Rescue 911* and in the pages of his several *Tekwar* books and TV series.

A possible Superman animated series is in the works.

Meanwhile, Patrick Stewart, who plays Picard, is next up in the film *Jeffrey*, where he is the romantic lead. "I beam myself into the city of New York, where I do some ballroom dancing," said Stewart of the summer film. "I hope the *Star Trek* fans won't be disappointed."

—Cindy Pearlman

Strange Trek

Star Trek fan-addicts can be more dangerous than Klingons. Just ask William Shatner (James T. Kirk) and Patrick Stewart (Jean-Luc Picard) about their strangest close encounters. Said Shatner, "Once, I was appearing in a horse show in Kentucky and I hitchhiked to the event. An old couple in a truck pulled up and said, 'Aren't you James T. Kirk?' I'm like, 'Yes, and I would love a ride in your truck.' They just said, 'Forget it. Beam yourself there.' And then they gave me the finger."

Stewart says his strangest fan meeting happened late at night in Los Angeles, outside of a cash machine. "I was nervous, because I was in a bad neighborhood at midnight. This car circled me once, and then twice. Now I was really sweating. Finally, a huge guy gets out of the car and yells, 'Captain Jean-Luc Picard?' I'm like, 'Uh, yes.' The man then drops to his knees and screams, 'I love this town.'"

—C.P.

Species, Species everywhere

When *Species*, the science fiction-horror drama about a half-human/half-alien creature on the prowl, hits theaters in July, it will be accompanied by two four-issue mini-series from Dark Horse Comics. The books, written by *Species* screenwriter turned first-time comic book scribe Dennis Feldman, will include an initial four-issue adaptation of the film, including sequences from the script that did not make the final cut of the film because of budget considerations. The second mini-series will continue the story from the point where the movie ends. An extra added attraction: Famed *Alien* creature designer H.R. Giger, who also designed the *Species* monster, will be creating two of the *Species* comic book covers.

—M.S.

The Predator's Back

Producer John Davis has announced a development deal that will bring back the butt-ugly alien hunter for *Predator 3*, in the not-too-distant future. This, of course, is news to the people at Predator Central, namely 20th Century Fox, which, claimed a spokesman, has a policy on talking about film projects in early development. It was also news to Lou Bank, v.p. of sales and marketing of Predator comics licensee Dark Horse Comics, who said, "I've heard nothing about it." Bank also said he does not know if a *Predator 3* project would be an adaptation of any previous Dark Horse *Predator* comics. So far, no director, cast, FX, or storyline announcement—but stay tuned.

—M.S.

You can't escape him. . *Predator 3* is coming!! Or is it?

Freddy vs. Jason

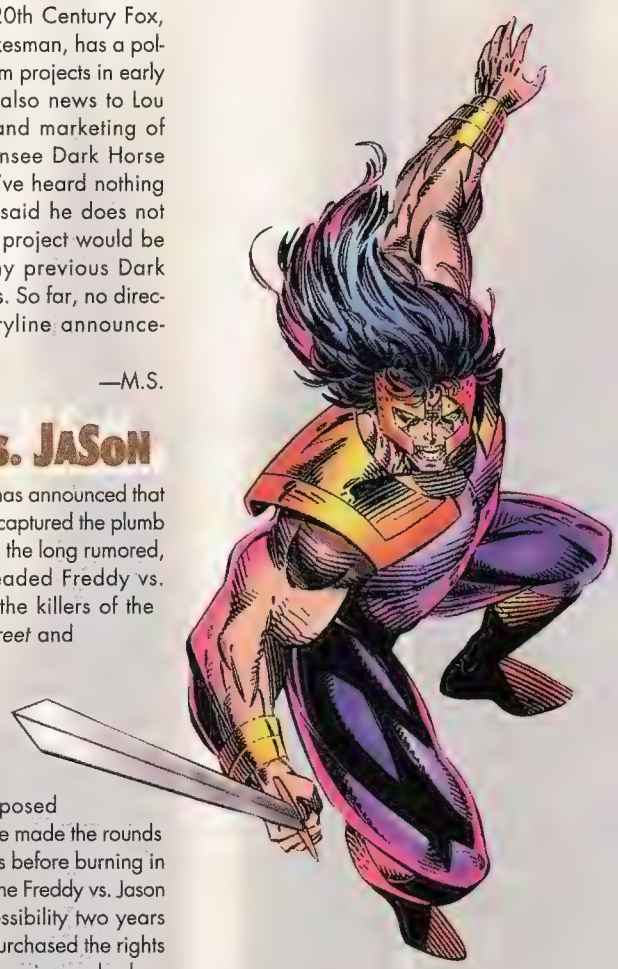
New Line Cinema has announced that writer Peter Briggs has captured the plumb assignment of scripting the long rumored, anticipated, and dreaded Freddy vs. Jason movie, linking the killers of the *Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Friday the 13th* film franchises, respectively. Briggs made some noise a couple of years ago when his script for the proposed *Alien vs. Predator* movie made the rounds and turned some heads before burning in pre-development hell. The Freddy vs. Jason team-up became a possibility two years ago when New Line purchased the rights to the *Friday the 13th* series and subsequently made *Jason Goes to Hell*.

Nightmare on Elm Street creator Wes Craven has confirmed the Freddy vs. Jason film being a strong possibility and, late in '94, actually met with *Friday* creator Sean Cunningham for an informal round of storyline swapping. Nothing came of it. In recent months, both Robert Englund, who plays Freddy Krueger, and Kane Hodder, who has played Jason in the last three *Friday* films, indicated they would do the film if the script was good.

—M.S.

Outtakes

Zen—The Intergalactic Ninja: The Movie is scheduled to go into production at the end of March or the beginning of April. The film was originally delayed from filming at the start of '95, due to a fourth rewrite on the script. The picture is still expected to be finished in time for editing in October and a December release. Zen is also in development with animation company Graz Entertainment for a cartoon series for the '96-'97 season. Graz, the animation studio which handles *X-Men*, will handle production, while Film Roman, the overseas studio for *The Simpsons*, will animate the series....Rob Liefeld's Extreme Studios is keeping busy as well. *Prophet* was optioned by Tri-Star Pictures recently; expect an A-list writer and director, and creator Rob Liefeld to produce the live-action film. Tri-Star is currently trying to woo Arnold Schwarzenegger to star. *The Mark* is at Paramount with Tom Cruise as a possible lead, and *Doom's IV* is still at Steven Spielberg's Amblin studio, keeping the back burner warm....Marvel Comics's African-American superhero Luke Cage may make the transition to the movies, according to a *Daily Variety* report. Producer Edward Pressman (*The Crow*) has struck a deal with director John Singleton (*Higher Learning*) and is working with writer Joe Doughrity on a script, according to the story....An *Evil Ernie* film project is coming from Chaos! Comics, but no specifics have been released yet. ☆



Prophet is one of several Extreme heroes to possibly hit the theatres.

Predator photo courtesy of Everett Collection. Predator ™ & © Twenteith Century Fox. Prophet ™ & © Rob Liefeld Inc.

ETERNAL WARRIOR®

JOHN OSTRANDER

JACKSON GUICE

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VALIANT®

COVERS BY PAUL GULACY

BIRTH-QUAKE!™

AFTERSHOCKS!

X-Men from A to Z!

To celebrate the return of the original X-Men and their titles, and a brand-new, exciting era for Marvel's mutants, we're giving away free X-Men original art and signed X-Men comics! *"**Free** X-Men original art and signed X-Men comics?!?"* you bellow, filled with doubt. Yeah, well, this is America—nothing's free. You gotta work for this stuff. "Aw—I knew it was too good to be true!" But before we go inta what you gotta do, look down below to see the stuff you win!

Grand Prize (One winner)

An original piece of framed X-Men art by Adam Kubert, as well as a set of the "After Xavier: The Age of Apocalypse" epic (the lead-off book *X-Men: Alpha* #1, *The Amazing X-Men* #1-#4, *The Astonishing X-Men* #1-#4, *Factor X* #1-#4, *Gambit & the X-Ternals* #1-#4, *Generation Next* #1-#4, *Weapon X* #1-#4, *X-Calibre* #1-#4, *X-Man* #1-#4, *X-Men Chronicles* #1-#2, *X-Men: Omega* #1 [regular and gold editions], and *X-Universe* #1-#2), and a set of the X-Men Prime issues (the lead-off book *X-Men: Prime* #1, *Cable* #21, *Excalibur* #87, *Generation X* #5, *Uncanny X-Men* #322, *Wolverine* #91, *X-Factor* #112, *X-Force* #44, and *X-Men* #42), all signed by their creators!

Neat stuff. But we ain't giving it all away for nuthin'. What you gotta do is strain your cabeza and name all 26 mutants that appear in the sky above them X-Men fellas in *Cable #20* (look at the image on the preceding page, or pick up the book itself). These are all current members of the several mutant teams: X-Men, X-Factor, X-Force, Excalibur, and Generation X. You've gotta be careful, though—some of 'em are a little tricky!

So, if you can name 'em all, fill out the official-lookin' coupon on the right, listing each mutant's name by the particular number, send it to the address down yonder, and then go get yourself checked for severe eyestrain.

WIZARD®

MARVEL COMICS

Spot the X-Men Contest
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

This contest expires July 31, 1995, so get off your mutie-lovin' butt and get crackin'!

LEGAL SCRAMBLE

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and anybody who can pronounce alla them Shi'ar names properly. There's something wrong with you, buddy. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the 26 names on the official entry form, a standard postcard, or a three-by-five-inch index card. Mail each entry to Spot the X-Men Contest, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Milk makes all the difference. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 31, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on August 1, 1995 by Wizard Press.

For the winner's name, available after August 18, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Spot the X-Men Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

X-Men logo, Marvel logo, and all characters shown ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

ENTRIES DUE BY JULY 31, 1995!

SPOT THE X-MEN CONTEST

NAME

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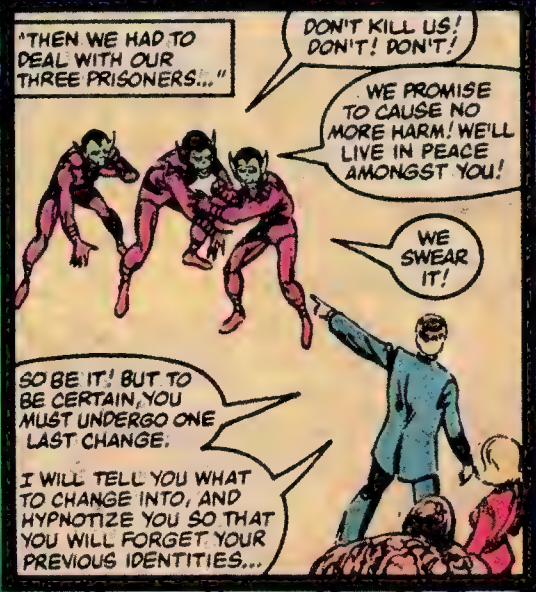
You are what you Eat

By Paul J. Grant

Writers Grant Morrison and Mark Millar put their spin on the Marvel Universe with the *Skrull Kill Krew*.



Strangers walk among us. What's worse is they can look just like us. Come this July, denizens of the Marvel Universe will have good reason to look askance at their neighbors, when the Scottish writing team of Grant Morrison and Mark Millar, along with British artist Steve Yeowell, bring us the ultra-violent adventures of the Skrull Kill Krew inside the comic of the very same name.

"I got the idea about two years ago," Morrison relates. "I sent [a proposal] into Marvel where it just lay on a desk for a while."

The idea is practically as old as the Marvel Universe itself, based on a tiny little plot point going all the way back to *Fantastic Four* #2 published in 1962, which introduced comicdom to the shape-changing alien race known as the Skrulls. At the end of that issue, three Skrull warriors were turned into cows. They showed up again briefly in *The Avengers* #93-#94, and then again in *Fantastic Four Annual* #17, but otherwise have apparently been forgotten.

And Morrison, a man known for his off-the-wall imagination and bizarre interpretations, took all he knew and twisted it into his own curious tale. In a premise vaguely reminiscent of Byrne's *FF Annual* #17 (where the Skrull cows' mind-altering milk allowed residents of an upstate town to shape shift), Morrison poses the questions of "What would happen if these cows were turned into hamburgers, and if those burgers were carrying some sort of alien virus based on the Skrull DNA, how would that affect people who ate them?"

He originally pitched the idea to Marvel editor Joey Cavalieri, but it didn't fit in well with Cavalieri's 2099 line of books, so the proposal languished until Marvel's recent line restructuring, when it caught the attention of "Marvel Edge" editor Bobbie Chase.

Morrison's concept, in a nutshell, is that those who ate Skrullburgers would be infected with the virus. On the plus side, they'd gain shape changing powers, added strength, and the ability to see the Skrulls Among Us in their true forms. On the minus side, the virus would slowly destroy their brains, bringing certain death and a rage that grows more uncontrollable over time.

These facts were first uncovered by Krew leader Ryder, a dread-locked former S.H.I.E.L.D. agent who was one of the virus's victims. Realizing he was essentially under a death sentence, he left the agency and went searching for those similarly affected. His goal was to recruit them into a strike force that would identify any living Skrulls disguised as humans, and blow them away.

Ryder and his fellow Krew members, designed by British artist Brendan McCarthy (see sidebar), are a hodgepodge of '90s disaffected youth archetypes. There's Moonstomp, a racist British skinhead who ironically has developed a disease that is gradually turning his skin black. Dice is an American surfer dude, whose morphing powers are wholly unpredictable; when he's about to morph, slot machine windows appear on his forehead and only when they come up all lemons does he manage to control his change. The two female members are diametric opposites. Riot is a spike-haired punk dressed in a suit and tie, who morphs into great spike-bodied insect forms, and Catwalk is a baby-doll cutie whose forms tend more toward feline and avian, often at the same time.

McCarthy's basic approach in designing the characters for *Skrull Kill Krew* was as a biker gang, rather than as superheroes. "I felt there was something faintly absurd about characters that look like, say, the Fantastic Four riding about on motorbikes. So one has to make them actually look like they're part of a motorcycle gang."

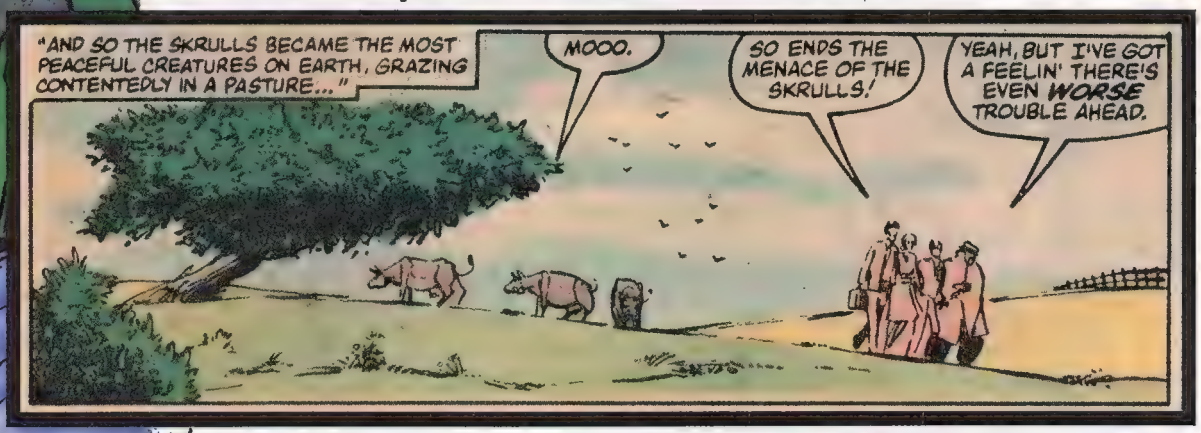
While *SKK* is set firmly in the Marvel Universe, and therefore other familiar Marvel faces are bound to show up, don't expect many traditional team-ups. After all, the Krew's tactics are at odds with traditional heroic values, so both the forces of the law and Skrulldom will be set against them.

"Basically, it's a team book for Marvel fans that is unlike anything that's been done before at Marvel," explains co-writer Mark Millar. "It's the idea of doing something new that's really exciting to both of us. The Marvel people were really excited about it, too, so it's going to come out quicker than most books usually do."

The creators in this enterprise are names not normally associated with mainstream superhero comics. Morrison himself is best known to American comic readers for his work in DC Comics's alternative Vertigo imprint with such titles as *Animal Man*, *Doom Patrol*, and *The Invisibles*. Writing partner Mark Millar is currently writing *Swamp Thing* for Vertigo, and penciler Steve Yeowell has a long history of partnership with Morrison on such things as *2000 A.D.*'s "Zenith" published in the UK, Vertigo's *Sebastian O*, and the aforementioned *The Invisibles*. However, most readers probably don't realize that Morrison and Yeowell actually first teamed up on a Marvel title, specifically Marvel UK's *Zoids* (based on the Japanese toy robot line).

"Don't let the pedigree fool you," advises series editor Tom Brevoort. "*Skrull Kill Krew* is an over-the-top

Inset and below: The "original Skrull cows" are sentenced to their bovine incarceration, as retold in *Fantastic Four Annual* #17.



SKRULL KILL KREW and all artwork and characters ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

action series."

"The truth of the matter is that Mark and I didn't really read too many horror comics when we were lads," recalls Morrison. "We read superheroes. In fact, just about all we read these days are superheroes, too, so it always seemed kind of natural we'd end up working for the country's best superhero comics publisher. We've both written Batman and a few other DC mainstream guys, but getting our hands on Spider-Man, Captain America, and the Avengers...Oh boy! It's the business!"

Millar agrees. "Marvel UK in the '70s were reprinting [Marvel's] old '60s comics, so I was just discovering [the comics stories of] Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. I've got a real fondness for all that old stuff, and it's the same kind of enthusiasm that they brought to their stuff in the '60s that we're trying to get now. We're looking at it with fresh eyes, because we've been away from Marvel for quite a while and it's really exciting to be among all these characters we love so much.

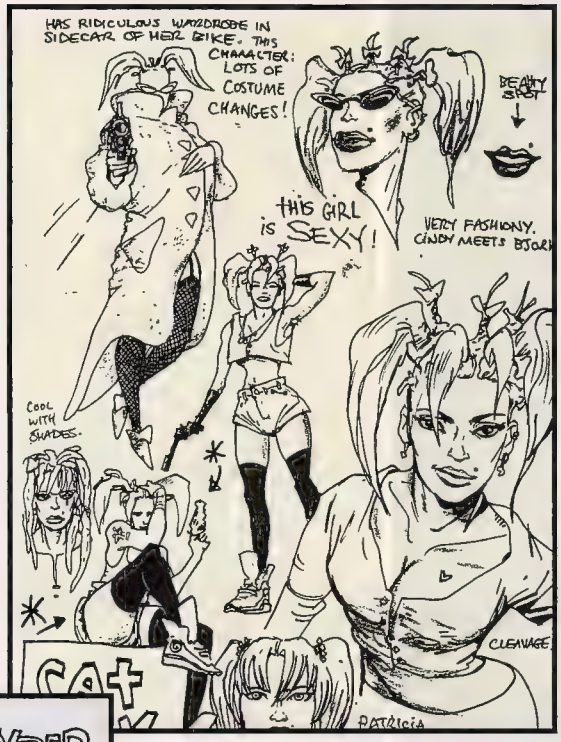
"Issues #2 and #3 have got Captain America in them," continues Millar. "And it all ties in quite nicely, 'cause the leader of the team is a former S.H.I.E.L.D. member and he's got a really shady past where he was kicked out of S.H.I.E.L.D. for something involving a lot of Marvel characters a few years ago. And Nick Fury's involved in it as well, and Baron Strucker's the villain for issues #2 and #3. We're just basically using everybody we always wanted to do. We're gonna try and get Spider-Man in at some point. The Fantastic Four will be dropping by. And the last three issues of the first year are gonna have the Avengers in it, because it's a reenactment, really, of the Kree/Skrull War, so everyone's gonna be involved in that."

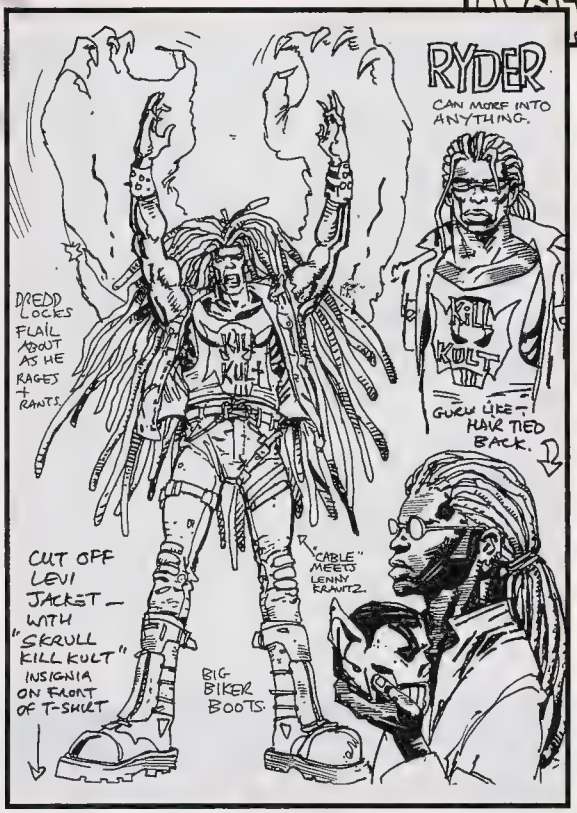
According to Millar, working for Marvel is apparently not too different from working for DC. "A lot of people said to us, when we said we were going to do this thing, 'How could you ever work for Marvel?' But the people we've dealt with at Marvel have really been terrific, totally supportive all the way, and we've got away with so many things that we really didn't think we would. There really hasn't been any problem at Marvel like we thought we might come up against after so much editorial leeway like we had at Vertigo. At Vertigo, you're given an opportunity to do anything you want, and we thought Marvel, being a corporate structure, would be a lot more restrictive, but that really hasn't been the case. I think you're going to see a lot more guys coming over."

Penciler Yeowell also finds the transition smooth. "I've not really changed my penciling style as such, although I've tried to make the pencils tighter, but I'm leaving it to Chris Ivy, the inker, to give the strip that whole Marvel sheen."

It is this combination of traditional and unconventional elements that Marvel is banking on to attract readers. As editor Brevoort candidly notes, "This is probably the worst time in recent memory to be launching a new comic." But, on the flip side, "I think risk-taking projects like *Skrull Kill Krew* are the kind of books Marvel should do more of. It's story driven. It's writer driven. It's concept driven. It's just an incredible blast to read." ☆

Michigan-based writer Paul J. Grant says he is 100-percent human, but only his hairdresser knows for sure.





Original character sketches by Brendan McCarthy.

CHANGING FACES

Perhaps you've seen his work in comics with Peter Milligan, such as Vertigo's *Rogan Gosh* or Tundra's controversial *Skin*, the latter of which was banned in England for three years, or *Johnny Nemo* or even *Strange Days* both from Eclipse. Perhaps not. Odds are, however, that you have seen British artist Brendan McCarthy's work and didn't even known it.

For example, McCarthy has been the production designer and storyboard artist on movies like the first *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* film, *Highlander*, *Enemy Mine*, and *Coneheads*. On the small screen, he designed strange creatures for Jim Henson's Emmy Award-winning show *The Storyteller*, and is one of the designers of ABC's *ReBoot*, a fully computer-animated half-hour Saturday morning series; he'll soon be directing some episodes as well. In the mid-1980s, when the big budget music video was in its heyday, he worked with such performers as Michael Jackson, Paul McCartney, and Dire Straits.

Obviously, Brendan McCarthy is a man of many parts. When he finds a free moment, however, he returns to his first love, comics. "What I really do is move in and out between comics and film and TV," he explains. "I find it keeps me fresh. I think if I did comics all the time, I'd get stale."

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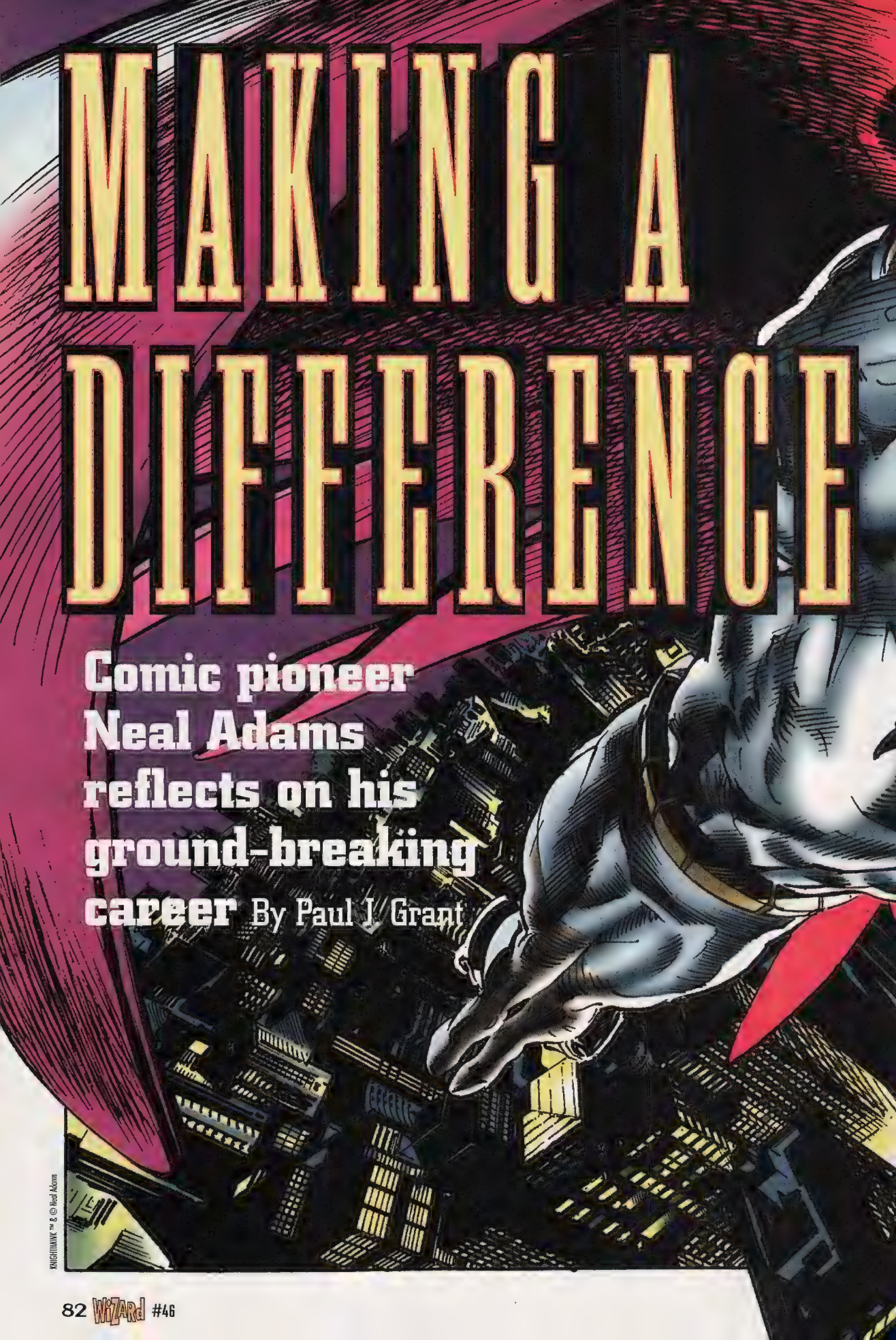
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Comic pioneer Neal Adams reflects on his ground-breaking career By Paul J. Grant



KNIGHTHAWK™ & © Neal Adams

A spread from Neal Adams's *Knighthawk*

There is a very strong case to be made for the argument that the single most influential artist in comics over the last 30 years has been Neal Adams, who almost single-handedly brought shadow and depth to the medium's visual vocabulary in his seminal work on such late '60s/early '70s titles as *Strange Adventures*, featuring Deadman, *X-Men*, *Green Lantern/Green Arrow*, *The Avengers*, and perhaps most importantly, *Batman* and related titles. One of the first of the independent comic book publishers, he is a long-time fighter for creator's rights. Now head of Continuity Studios, whose comic publishing operations are on hiatus, he discussed his illustrious career in late 1994, as he stands ready to unleash his creations, including Knighthawk, Valeria the She-Bat, and Samuree, through Acclaim Comics's Windjammer imprint, starting in May.

"I think of myself as someone who brings aspects of illustration into the

Mr. Neal Adams

Photo © J. Schuyler

WIZARD: Tell me how you broke into the business.

NEAL ADAMS: I broke into the business in 1959. I was 18 years old, just out of high school, and did not have the money nor the scholarship abilities to go to college. I basically had to support my family, and I had chosen stupidly to become a comic book artist in a time when nobody was hiring comic book artists.

Why did you make that particular career choice?

Mostly, because I didn't feel by the time I finished high school that I would be sufficiently proficient to be an illustrator. At that time in history, the comic book industry was a bad business to be in. Everybody was deserting it. All the famous and near-famous artists and writers had left it. The people who were left with any quality—like Joe Kubert, Russ Heath, and Mort Drucker—were only surviving because they were working for DC Comics. EC Comics had come down with a crash. Marvel at that time was Timely Comics, and they did those dreadful Stan Lee stories of which there were five plots, according to historians—Mogog the Gogog and other variations. Then there was Charlton, and Archie Comics, of course. I went up to DC with my first portfolio, and they were nice enough to meet me in the lobby and tell me that my work couldn't be used. I didn't understand why; they never gave me an explanation. Then I went to Archie, where they allowed that I could do some joke pages if my work was sufficiently good. Every couple of days, I came up there with two new sample pages, and they would find something wrong with them. Finally, they accepted my samples and gave me work.

You then did comic strips?

I was the assistant on a syndicated comic strip based on the *Bat Masterson* TV series. Then, at the fairly early age of 21, I landed a syndicated comic strip myself based on the *Ben Casey* TV series. At that point, I was very competitive with the top guys in the field, and I guess I thought I was going to be a syndicated strip artist for the rest of my life, or at least until I became an illustrator.

At a certain point, I could see that the comic strip field was not for me, that it was a dying business, that it was time for me to go into the illustration field. I left the comic strip and I painted a portfolio. It took me six months. I did paintings and illustrations in a number of different styles, and went out to seek my new fortune as an illustrator.

One day, not long after that, I left my portfolio at an advertising agency, hoping to get work, and when I went to get my portfolio two days later, it was missing. Six months' work down the drain. They couldn't find it, and it would never be found. I realized that I had not earned much of a living for six months. I had done some storyboard work and some other stuff, but basically I decided I had better get my career started one way or another. So I cast around to do comic book work. The first work I picked up was from Archie Goodwin, a gentleman editor at Warren Publications. I then went to DC and met a non-gentleman editor Robert Kanigher, who was probably one of the crustiest, nastiest editors on Earth, but you kinda had to like him. He gave me some war stories to do.

What happened in the interim was Marvel had started to do comics that were taking attention away from DC. DC was starting to feel the bite, for the first time in a decade, of competition that was actually selling comic books. In a way, I was in a fortunate place at a fortunate time. There were no new people at DC being let in the door, and I had like fallen out of the sky. It was such a retrograde business, such a medieval type of place, that the people who worked at DC never read the comic strips. They never did anything outside of their very small world, and they had no idea where I had come from, yet I could do everything they could do and more, and brought a certain amount of attention to DC. So DC, after a short while, started having me do many different things.

Like what?

Characters like the Spectre and Deadman. Basically, they had me do everything. I became, in some small way, the only bulwark against what Marvel was doing, [where Marvel] was hiring some old professionals who had been around a long time and giving them superheroes to do, and starting to hire some new young artists that were just beginning to come up. I was basically the only new face at DC, so anything that they wanted to experiment with, anything they wanted to try that might be new, they had me do. At that time, I was of course a young lion who wanted to do new stuff, so I was constantly irritating them and driving them crazy, but at the same time, providing them with fresh, new ideas. So at one moment they hated me, and the next moment they loved me.

You were working at that time from full scripts, right? How did you bring your own particular vision to the process?

The best example I can think of is, at that time there was a television show called *Batman*. DC didn't quite understand why, while they were doing so well [with] the television show, the Batman comics weren't selling. I went to Julie Schwartz, who was editing [the Batman books], and who had become a rel-

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X-MEN and all related characters ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

comic book field, and who went out of their way to make high drama out of comic books."

ative friend—actually, Julie doesn't become your friend, he becomes someone who's willing to abuse you—and I asked him one day, "Julie, I'd really like to do a Batman story." And he said, "Get outta here."

So, undaunted, I went to Murray Boltinoff, and asked him if I could do a comic he was then editing called *The Brave & the Bold*, which at the time [teamed] Batman with other characters. Of course, I received full scripts, which gave me an opportunity as an artist to alter only a few things. The writer describes an event; I, as the artist, decide that this event is going to take place at night. He asks for Batman to come into the room; I decide that Batman will come in through the window, in the shadows. I decide that Batman's cape is going to be longer, his ears are going to be more pointy, the lighting on his face more shadowed, and I make Batman a more mysterious character than [the Batman] on the television show and in the comic books, who was walking around in the daytime in his underwear. I made Batman into a dark character, a Dark Knight, for several issues.

One day, Julie Schwartz came storming down the hallway at me, and said, "What the hell are you doing with *Brave & Bold*? I'm getting all these letters that say the real Batman's in *The Brave & the Bold*." I said, "Julie, I asked you if I could draw Batman. You didn't let me." "Well, you're drawing Batman now." What was nice about that was that [editor/inker] Dick Giordano had recently come from Charlton and brought with him a couple of writers, including Denny O'Neil. Denny started writing Batman at the same time I started drawing it, and we turned out to be a pretty good team.

Denny O'Neil is probably the writer whose name is most linked with yours in terms of quality of output. In retrospect, did you feel at the time that this was a magic combination of talents?

In all honesty, I didn't expect that it was going to happen. I had worked with various writers at DC, all of whom I had respect for, but at the time I had written a number of Deadman stories myself, and it seemed to me at that point that I was doomed to write my own stories because I really wasn't satisfied with anybody else's work. But I found with Denny, I was comfortable enough to say, "Maybe I don't have to write my own stuff."

One of your best-remembered team-ups with Denny was in the *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* book. How much input did you have in those stories?

For the most part, 90 percent of those stories were Denny's. I would occasionally suggest that we tackle certain subjects. The only one where I made the decision as to what we were going to do was the drug story. I thought it was time for comic books to do drugs.

Clockwise from top: Adams made Ka-Zar cool; a tragic scene from a '70s Batman tabloid issue; a reprint of the controversial drug abuse cover from *Green Lantern* (vol. 1) #85.

"I was basically the only new face at DC, so anything that they wanted to experiment with, anything they wanted to try that might be new, they had me do."

DC's "experimental" Deadman

DEADMAN ™ & © DC Comics.

Perhaps a poor choice of words.

Exactly. [Laughs] Since I knew it was *verboten* under the Comics Code at the time, I went home and I drew the cover that now appears on *Green Lantern* #85.

Speedy with the drug paraphernalia.

I brought it in finished, and gave it to Julie Schwartz, who dropped it on his desk like I had given him a hot potato. Everybody at DC liked it, but it was a fearful thing to contemplate.

Had the Spider-Man story involving drug use come out at that time?

Stan Lee had done something in *Amazing Spider-Man* about drugs, and the Comics Code Authority had rejected it. Stan did a pretty brave thing; he decided to print that comic without the Comics Code seal. Over at DC, they just flipped out. Within two weeks, there was a publisher's meeting and the Comics Code guidelines were rewritten. Immediately subsequent to that, we received the green light to go ahead with that particular book.

At about the same time, you were also doing some work for Marvel. Was it unusual for someone to do work for both companies at that time?

When artists went from one company to another for assignments, they didn't use their real names. There was very little that writers and artists were doing to express their freedom to move back and forth between the companies, to fight for rates that were fair to make a living [with]. I went over to Marvel, and I talked to Stan, who said, "You can do any book we have." I said, "Which book is selling the least?" He said, "*X-Men*. We're about to cancel it." I said, "I'll take it." He asked why and I said, "If I do *X-Men*, you won't bother me, right?" "Right. OK, how shall we list you in the credits? What name would you like to use?" "Well, Stan, my name is Neal Adams, so if you'd write that down, I'd appreciate that." "How would they feel at DC?" "Stan, I'm a freelancer, so it really doesn't matter how they feel about it at DC." "Are you still going to work for DC?" "Yes." "You know we don't like someone who is working for us to work for DC." "I guess that means I can't draw your comic books for you." "No, no, I don't mean that...so you want to be Neal Adams." "I am Neal Adams." "OK, you got it." That was the end of that conversation. You think about [how things are] now, you think, "That's impossible," but no, that's the way it was.

How did working with Roy Thomas on *X-Men* differ from working with Denny O'Neil?

The only two writers at Marvel were Stan and Roy, and since they were very busy, they were grateful when the artist provided the story. So I drew the stories from my own plots, and Roy provided the dialogue.

So you were responsible for creating Sauron and Havok?

Yeah. I brought Professor X and Magneto back from the dead. I did about 10 books, and the sales did not go up sufficiently to satisfy them. Only later did they discover that their sales data was lagging about six months behind. One of the reasons they brought back the X-Men was that every new artist that came to Marvel after those 10 issues wanted to do the X-Men. What you discover is that each new artist, in their turn, will do a Sauron story and go into the Savage Land with Ka-Zar, and bring back Magneto, until they go on and do stories of their own. Dave Cockrum did it, John Byrne and Jim Lee, and even the TV cartoon. They all went through the same process.

You then moved to *The Avengers* and started a truly immense storyline, the Kree-Skrull War, the most ambitious story Marvel had done to date. You did five issues—#92 to #96—only to be replaced by John Buscema, who concluded the tale. What happened?

I sort of work on faith. I was happy at Marvel with Roy Thomas, and I was happy doing *The Avengers*. I just felt they were a big group and therefore needed to do something big. Roy left me alone again, and I just went crazy and started to do this story. Roy was going through a difficult time in those days, and at one point he could not dedicate himself to the story. [This] led to bringing other people into the project. I got tired of being in the middle of it, and I essentially just said, "No. That's enough for me."

Did you ever give any thought to how you would have ended the story?

Sure! I had in mind another 10 to 15 books of the Kree-Skrull. In fact, at Continuity I plan to finish some unfinished business and do an intergalactic war. It needs to be done, you know.

Did you become disenchanted with the industry at this point?

Not at all. I have too much fun doing comic books, but I went on a personal strike. Dick Giordano and I had set up Continuity Studios, and we were doing both comic and non-comic work, which made us independent of DC and Marvel. What made things difficult for me to continue working in comics was the problem with Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the creators of Superman.

You were personally involved in efforts to get them some sort of recompense from DC. Can you tell me what actions you took?

I can only really cover it lightly, because by agreement with DC and Warner Brothers, I'm really not contractually able to talk about it in detail for their sake. [Jerry and Joe] were both, by then, in their sixties. Jerry Siegel was making $7,500 a year as a clerk. Joe Shuster was living off the income of his brother, because he was legally blind. They had perhaps taken bad advice from their lawyers. Siegel wrote a nine-page letter to the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* which came to the Academy of Comic Book Arts, of which I was the president. I resolved that the resources of my little company were going to be put into resolving this situation, to see that Jerry and Joe were going to be paid on a weekly basis some reasonable amount of money to take care of them for the rest of their lives. Three months or so later, after a lot of hard work, we got our deal for Jerry and Joe.

THREE PART MINI-SERIES

SAMUREE

MISTRESS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS

SWORD OF THE DAMNED THING!

•Peter Stone
•Rodolfo Dimaggio
•Neal Adams
•Saw Nan
• Cory
•Beachum

ACCLAIM COMICS, INC.

That wasn't the basis for your strike, though, was it?

Once that was resolved, I discovered the Work Made for Hire provision in the new copyright law, which I considered a total outrage. The difficulty with the provision, in my opinion: the intention of the copyright law, in a country like America, is to create a balance between the publisher and the creative contributor. In creating that balance, it seems as though there ought to be two different ways of employing a person—that is, either as an employee, in which all benefits and conditions of employment are set by the employer, or as a freelance contractor, which means that the person is a separate business, and they agree to work together under a contract that each of them signed. It seems to me there should be no third category, in which a person works as a freelancer and gets no benefits, and then must, according to the law and the agreement, be treated as though they were an employee. I can't see how it makes any sense—you can't call somebody one thing, and then make them another.

I decided to go on a personal strike from DC and Marvel [in the late '70s], just to let people know that. I wanted to change the industry from the outside. What I did was devote a percentage of the money that I earned at Continuity to finance projects by certain artists and writers: *Bucky O'Hare* by Larry Hama and Michael Golden, *Freakshow* by Bernie Wrightson and Bruce Jones, and Howard Chaykin's *Cody Starbuck*. We took a proprietor's interest in these projects, but left ownership in the creators' hands. I lost money on this plan, but the offshoot was that people looked at this and got the idea that they, too, could publish comics. It totally changed the face of the industry.

***Star*Reach* happened before then, though, didn't it?**

*Star*Reach* [a black-and-white anthology series that began in 1974] was not taken seriously by anyone. It was an indication of things to come, but basically it was like a fanzine.

So you did advertising work, book jackets, album covers...

Everything on Earth.

...and even directed a film.

It was more or less a student film, although it's tough to be a student at 40. It was called *'Nanas*, but now it's known as *Death to the Pee-Wee Squad*, and it was distributed by the folks at Troma, perhaps the worst distributor on Earth. The movie's about two children who are being pursued by three groups of industrial spies, and are saved by a monkey doll named 'Nanas.

Didn't that distract you and Continuity from going back to doing comic books?

I was so busy doing commercial work that I really couldn't turn out much in the way of comic books, but there isn't a day that goes by that I don't do comic books one way or another. They may not be the comic books you see. We're going have a series of *Classics Illustrated*-type comic books that will appear in the Wendy's fast food chain by April, probably the most copies of any one title than have ever appeared in the history of man on Earth. They will be handed out for free. The titles include *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* and *Gulliver's Travels*.

Continuity developed a reputation for lateness and long delays in the publication of announced books.

My company has been guilty of being late in general, along with Image and a whole bunch of other people in the industry, to my chagrin. The price for being late was heavy indeed. One of the reasons I had to shut down Continuity recently is that not only were we late with our comic books, [but] any effort we made to catch up with our schedule was greeted with worse abuse.

When you shut down operations earlier in 1994, you left two major storylines unresolved: "Deathwatch 2000" and "The Rise of Magic." Do you plan on having those completed as originally announced? For example, will Michael Golden still be the artist for the last chapter of "Deathwatch 2000"?

Michael drew up to, I believe, page 10 and then dropped out to other things. I will pencil and ink the remainder. The pages that Michael did are so good that I have to work my best to come anywhere near them.

How much more remains to finish "The Rise of Magic"?

A lot. About 20 books. I had to stop that project because if we had gone on, we would have gone bankrupt. Continuity, unlike many companies bankrolled by investor money, is

Classic Neal Adams: *Avengers* #93

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VALERIA THE SHE-BAT ™ & © Neal Adams

essentially supported out of my art studio. At the beginning of "Deathwatch 2000," we found we were actually making money for the first time in our history, but we over-obligated ourselves. We made some bad business decisions which could have corrected themselves, except that the crash was happening. On the other hand, one of the things learned was that Continuity isn't really good at doing monthly comics. So we're going to do a six-issue *Knighthawk* series, but we're going to be doing it through Acclaim Comics's Windjammer imprint.

Why go through Windjammer instead of publishing it yourself?

Because I took a look at the current state of the industry, and decided I'm tired of losing money. Acclaim made me an offer I couldn't refuse, and it makes sense at this point to have someone else shoulder part of the risk. We're also going to be doing a two-issue *Valeria* and a three-issue *Samuree* series with Windjammer.

What about finishing "The Rise of Magic"?

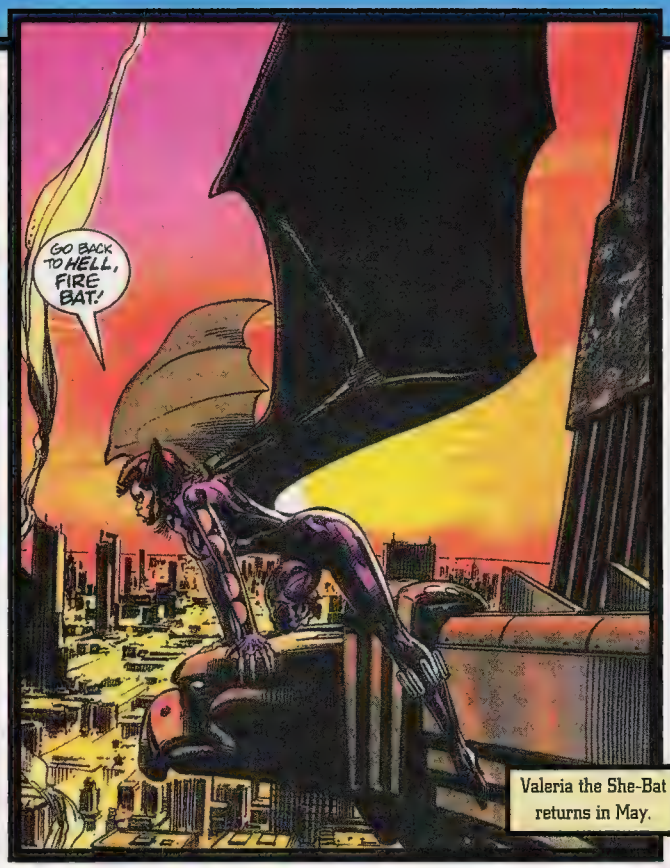
Eventually. All the things I wanted to do in "Rise of Magic" we're now doing carefully, so the art will be good, the editing will be good, the holograms and extras will be right, and it will all come out in a three- or four-month period, and you can buy it to the end. When it's over with, we'll have another project. No more soliciting before the work is done. [That's a] new policy at Continuity.

So any rumors about Continuity's demise are premature.

We are the oldest independent comic book company out there that's survived. We may not be publishing now, but we haven't gone bankrupt and we're not out of business.

What happened to the Spawn/Valeria the She-Bat crossover that had been announced to go into *Valeria* #3?

We had worked out an arrangement with [Spawn creator] Todd McFarlane, and it was done on a handshake deal, actually over the telephone. At first it was going to be one issue, and then we asked if it could be two. Todd agreed, so we solicited the book. You know, when you do it on a handshake, sometimes they can change the rules on the other end? I didn't know that. Todd was concerned, he said, that somehow this was going to eat into the sales of the Spawn/Batman [crossover with DC], so he pulled the plug. He never told me directly, but had another person call me and say that they felt they were getting too close to the Batman books. I changed the story to replace Spawn with Knighthawk, but now it no longer matched the solicitation, which had generated 300,000 copies. Issue #3 [of *Valeria*] sold 58,000 copies.



Valeria the She-Bat returns in May.

After all these years, how do you really feel about Batman?

I'm personally not a big fan of Batman, although I am somewhat a fan of people who can take care of themselves. Batman is much better at it than anybody that I could imagine, in that if you're a normal human being and you don't have any superpowers, and you're going to go out and try to catch criminals and you're going to do what Batman does, you had better be awfully good at what you do. Batman is not only awfully good at what he does, he's close to a genius, and probably the best athlete in the world.

Would you like to go back and do some more Batman?

In fact, I was scheduled to do a Batman story with Denny O'Neil, but it was later done by Mike Netzer [as the 1992 *The Poison Tomorrow* book]. I had some problems with the script. I thought it was awfully slow-moving for my reentry into doing Batman, and I asked to have it juiced up a little bit. There seemed to be some editorial policy at DC that prevented that, and [editor] Archie Goodwin withdrew it from me. But it may happen sooner than you think. There are lots of surprises coming. I'll give you a little hint. One of the drawings that's above my desk is a drawing of some licensing art for the new Batman movie. It has a signature on it that says Neal Adams.

Do you still read Batman on a regular basis?

Not on any regular basis. There are certain artists who will do Batman and it will jump right out at you. I always give Denny a shot, because Denny's the man. I certainly read the [*Sword of*] *Azrael* series, which DC forgot to promote in the beginning. "Ah, guys—do you know that you're doing these books with two of the best artists in the field [Joe Quesada and Kevin Nowlan]?" That was kick-ass stuff.

How did you develop the style for which you are best known?

There's a word in your question which has a different meaning for me than you may imply, and that's the word "style." I consider "style" to be what you do when you're not good enough to do it perfectly.

I meant more than just technique. The line work, the layouts, the larger-than-life characterizations, the use of shadows—these are the things I think of when I hear "Neal Adams."

And sometimes I do, too, but I think of myself as someone who brings aspects of illustration into the comic book field, and who went out of their way to make high drama out of something as "low" as comic books. When I came into comic books, it was not so much that I was doing all these new and different things, it was that the people who were doing comic books at that time were not. I was shocked that people didn't think that way already. I knew no artists who thought in terms of designing a page, rather than just a panel.

Do you consider this your legacy?

If you look at the comic book business now, most of the standards that you saw in my work have been accepted by many people in the industry and have become part of the regular lexicon of what comic books are all about. We have entered into a time—and I believe I was present when the new door opened—when someone who is thoroughly professional, [and] has learned all the skills of storytelling, structure, and design, can apply that to doing comic books, a medium in which there is such a degree of freedom and potential that we are only now just beginning to feel the edge of it. ☆

Paul J. Grant is a Michigan-based corporate writer and part-time freelance lawyer, and once opened for Bob Seger.

AN EXHIBITION OF THE FINEST PAINTERS IN THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY...

Julie Bell,
Dan Brereton,
Joe Chiodo,
Dave Dorman,
John Estes,
Bo Hampton,
Scott Hampton,
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WILDSTORM GALLERY

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George Pratt,
Bill Sienkiewicz,
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Mark Texeira,
Matt Wagner...
and more!

~ John K. Snyder III

~Joe Chiodo

~ Bill Sienkiewicz

~ Matt Wagner

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Superartist George Pérez handles penciling chores on the Malibu half of the crossover, as well as the covers to *UltraForce* #9 (here) and #8 (opposite).

Earths' Mightiest Heroes

Key elements to the Avengers/UltraForce crossover add to fans' anticipation

By Patrick Daniel O'Neill

The news that Marvel Comics's Avengers will meet Malibu Comics's UltraForce has raced through fandom. Besides the fact that the two supergroups will meet, the news that renowned *Avengers* (and current *UltraForce*) artist George Pérez will have an artistic hand in the meeting also moved through fan ranks like wildfire. And, in addition, for the three-issue *UltraForce* run-up to the big meeting, Pérez is being joined by his former *New Teen Titans* partner Marv Wolfman, who will be supplying the dialogue.

The crossover starts when the Black Knight shows up in May's *UltraForce* #8, after having been missing from the Marvel Universe for several months. The Knight's sojourn with the Ultras runs through *UltraForce* #10, and then moves into *UltraForce/Avengers Prelude* #1, written by new *UF* writer Warren Ellis and its editor Hank Kanalz, with art by John Royle and John Statema.

Following that comes the big team crossover event itself, a two-issue mini-series. The first issue will come from Marvel with script by Glenn Herdling and art by Angel Medina; the second is from Malibu, with script by Ellis and art by Pérez. Pérez will also be providing the covers to both crossover issues.

Although both Pérez and Wolfman are pleased to be working on the same title again, they stress that this can't be called a reunion. Wolfman notes that he's merely playing a fill-in role by providing the regular *UltraForce* crew with a script to go along with Kanalz's plot and Pérez's pencils.

Pérez says the knowledge that Wolfman is now a part of the team, however small, has shifted how he looks at the job. "I don't want Marv to be disappointed working with me again," he chuckles. "I was getting two pages done a day; now I'm down to one, because I want to put in all the little details or Marv won't recognize it's me. There are certain Pérez expectations. I was originally planning to do this as just layouts—but now Marv's involved. He was not only my partner, but one of my harshest critics. I'll be curious to see the final result; it's the first time Marv and I have ever worked this way."

As for the meeting of Ultras and Avengers, editor Kanalz admits to some early trepidation that the crossovers with Marvel characters would destroy the uniqueness of the Ultraverse, but now he says, "The premise of the crossovers precludes that. What we've been able to do is bring the uniqueness of the Ultraverse to the Marvel Universe, and bring everything that long-time fans love about the Marvel Universe to the Ultraverse. We can compare and contrast them. The Black Knight pops up in the Ultraverse, a world that only recently began having superpowered people, coming from a world that has long had them and where it seems there's a superhero on every block. The Black Knight, who *hasn't* been a leader in the Marvel Universe, becomes a natural leader in the Ultraverse because of all the experience he has."

Following the crossover—which then spins into a huge Malibu event ominously called "Black September"—both universes will contain a number of significant differences, says Kanalz. "A couple of our characters will actually be stuck in the Marvel Universe after the crossover. As for the Ultraverse, we intend to keep the Black Knight. He's not going back yet." ☆

Contributing Editor Patrick Daniel O'Neill is the leader of his own universe.

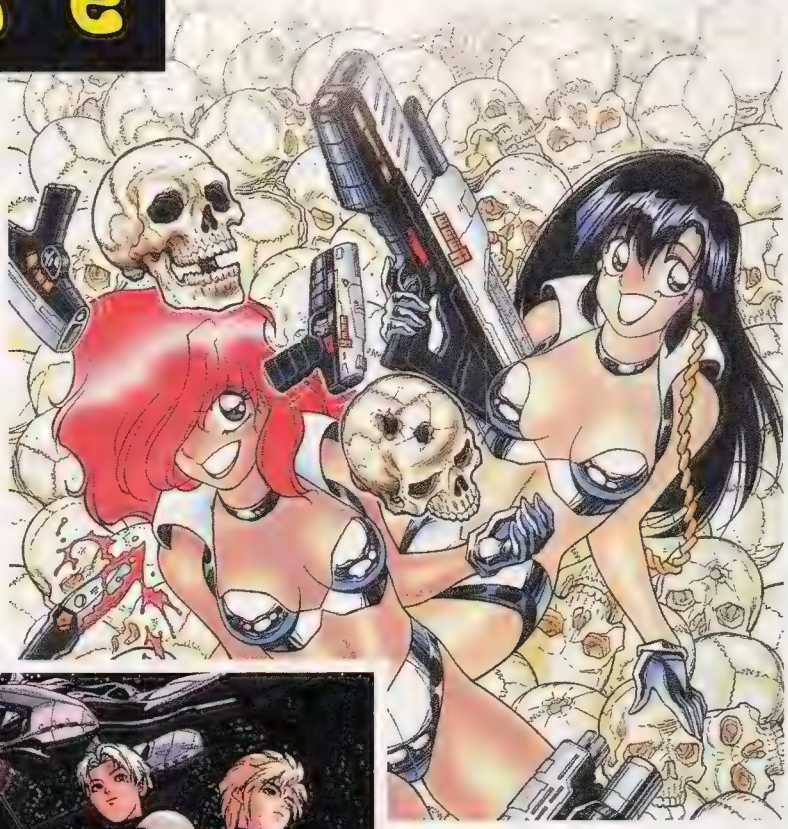
THE AVENGERS and all related characters ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.
ULTRAFORCE and all related characters ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

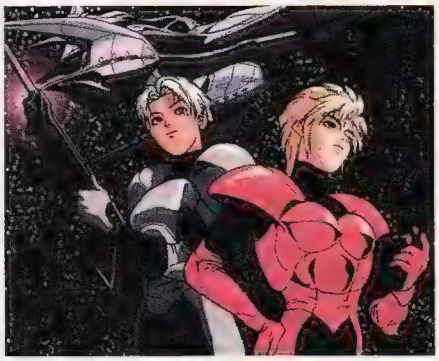
by Lea Hernandez

print anime

So, you've watched anime videos like *Sol Bianca* or *BubbleGum Crisis*, and found yourself wanting more. Perhaps you wanted new stories, or found manga "too Japanese," and would prefer something that has a Japanese flavor, but with an American twist. Before now, you might have gone to your local comics store and discovered that there wasn't a lot to choose from. Fans hungry for anime-based comics were mostly out of luck unless a favorite video happened to be a translated manga.

But that's changed recently. There are more anime-inspired, American-produced comics available than ever before. Since most of these titles may be a little hard to find in your local shop, I suggest asking for them if you don't see them, ordering them from your favorite store or retailer, or acquiring a copy of *Advance Comics*'s exhaustive anime/manga supplement, *Anime Archive/Mega Manga*. These comics can be a challenge to acquire, but for anime and manga fans wanting more, and American comics fans wanting something "different," they're well worth the effort.





Dirty Pair **(above) is brought to you by the folks from Dark Horse and Studio Proteus, while *Sol Bianca* is from Graphic Visions.**

Academy Comics

Like all of the other companies, Academy works closely with its license holders to ensure that its comics are true to the spirit of the original material. In Academy's case, this means no nudity, excessive violence, or politics. All material produced by Academy is pre-approved. Even with these seemingly strict guidelines, Academy has an ambitious and varied line of comics.

Jean Elane, Academy Comics's guiding force, decided to obtain the Robotech license because of Robotech's strong niche market and its devoted fan base.

Some readers may not have heard of Robotech, but only if they weren't anywhere near a television set in the early- to mid-'80s. Robotech was a mega-hit in syndicated television, with its own line of comics from Comico, toys, and dolls. It's possible Robotech is going to be completely new to some, while being a big nostalgia trip for others.

Academy plans on publishing six different Robotech-related titles, all $2.95, monthly and ongoing. These include: *Robotech: Return to Macross*; *The Sentinels, Book III* (by the long-time fan-favorite team of John and Jason Waltrip); *Aftermath*; *Robotech Warriors*; *Academy Blues*; and *Clone*. While most of these are the straightforward Robotech mecha-action/drama mix, a couple are of special interest: *Academy Blues* and *Clone*. *Academy Blues* tells the story of Robotech's most popular character, Lisa Hayes, and her early days as a cadet in Pilot Academy. *Clone*, by Rosearik Rikki and Tavisha Wolfgarth, is labeled "science fiction/esoterica," an interesting description for art that owes a great deal of its delicacy to shojo (girl's) manga. Comic book readers looking for something quite different should give *Clone* a try.

CPM Comics

One of two comic book companies started by a video company, CPM Comics was the brainchild of Central Park Media president John O'Donnell. O'Donnell turned his passion for anime into U.S. Manga Corps, currently the largest anime supplier in the U.S., and his enthusiasm for manga and comics into CPM Comics.

CPM's first foray into comics was with Malibu and Tim Eldred (as well as Ben Dunn of Antarctic Press) on the successful adaptation of the definitive anime satire, *Project A-ko*, in March 1994. CPM decided to build on this success by continuing *A-ko* under its

DIRTY PAIR ™ & © 1995 Hokuro Takachiho and Adam Warren. SOL BIANCA ™ & © 1995 NEC Avenue, All Rights Reserved, & A.D. Vision.

From the cartoon series comes Academy's *Robotech*.

own banner, and adding two more titles: *Gall Force* and *M.D. Geist*. Unlike any of the other companies doing anime-inspired comics, CPM is (for now) doing adaptations, rather than new stories.

Gall Force is the story of a crew of soldiers from an all-female race who find themselves being sacrificed one by one after their ship is invaded by an "alien." The anime was designed by Kenichi Sonoda, an artist who has been popular among anime and manga fans here in the states for years, so it has a solid visual base, as well as an epic storyline.

Koichi Ohata's *M.D. Geist* (M.D. stands for Most Dangerous) is action-oriented as well, but the style of art and storytelling are more realistic than *Gall Force*. Ohata scripts the books, and does the cover art and main splash panels. It's an unusual work method that *Geist* artist Tim Eldred hopes will set a precedent for future collaborations between American and Japanese artists.

The *Project A-ko* graphic novel, which collects the Malibu issues, shipped in March. *A-ko2* begins in April with a 32-page swimsuit issue. *M.D. Geist* launches this summer. All CPM Comics are color, and cost a mere $2.95.

Dark Horse/Studio Proteus

Studio Proteus packages, Dark Horse publishes. There are only two titles, but they are without a doubt two of the best-known, most popular series in either animated or comic book form: *The Dirty Pair* and *BubbleGum Crisis*.

Dirty Pair became and remained popular among U.S. anime fans long after it completed its very short (less than 25 episodes) run on Japanese television in the '80s. American fans quickly took to the gun-toting, scantily clad secret agents Kei and Yuri, including Adam Warren, then a student at the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. Warren's artwork was shown to Studio Proteus head Toren Smith, who felt that anime fans wanted a certain type of art, and that Warren's art was it. Smith acquired the rights for *Dirty Pair* directly from series creator Haruka Takachiho, who created the Pair in a series of award-winning sci-fi novels.

Warren also had the task of writing and drawing a "prequel" to the best-selling, made-for-video series *BubbleGum Crisis*. *BGC* is about the struggles of a group of beautiful, armored-to-the-teeth women known as the Knight Sabers and the evil corporation Genom. The nominal heroine is Priss (yes, named after the android in *Blade Runner*), who stars in the *BGC* anime and comic as a nihilistic rock 'n' roll singer. *BGC* was brought to Studio Proteus by AnimEigo (the subtitler and distributor of *BGC* in the U.S.) President Robert Woodhead.

Dirty Pair: Fatal But Not Serious, with art and story by Warren and colored by *X-Men* and Image colorist Joe Rosas, debuts as a monthly early this summer. The collected *BubbleGum Crisis*, again by Warren and Rosas, comes out later this year.

Graphic Visions

A.D. Vision was founded by anime fans to bring more anime to North America. The company then formed Graphic Visions to keep control of its properties, and eliminate the worries of possible "creative differences" with any established publishers of manga-inspired material.

A.D. Visions's first two "new" comics (the company also publishes translated material) are *Sol Bianca* and *Burn Up!*

Award-winning artist Lorraine Reyes was chosen to maintain the continuity between the animated and printed versions of *Sol Bianca*. Reyes produced dozens of design sheets, reference charts, and diagrams indistinguishable from the work of the original film artists.

Ben Nuñez was chosen for *Burn Up!*, a schizophrenic mix of heavy action and broad humor. GV plans on using a number of artists to handle the extremes of the story, but Nuñez has finished the first issue and penciled the second.

Sol Bianca and *Burn Up!* are quarterly, and in black-and-white.

Thanks to all the *Wizard* Manga Scene readers who e-mailed me their thoughts. Keep the e-mail coming to akiyama@cris.com. ☆

Lea Hernandez has lettered and retouched manga for 10 years and serves as moderator of Japanese animation and manga for the online service GEnie. Special thanks to Toren and Tomoko Smith for their help in preparing this column.

pick of the month

video: *Black Magic M-66*

(Manga Entertainment)

The M in M-66 stands for "marionette," but the killer androids in this video are neither adorable Pinnochios nor under anyone's control. A tenacious video journalist named Sybel becomes involved in a military fiasco when the military loses two M-66 units. One escapes, and goes on a mission to destroy its inventor's granddaughter, Ferris. In spite of its brief run time (48 minutes), action fans will eat this up; it is tense, well-animated, and tight.

Black Magic M-66 was very loosely based on the Masamune Shirow (*Appleseed, Ghost in the Shell*) manga of the same name, and directed by Shirow along with Hiroyuki Kitakubo. Shirow also wrote the screenplay and produced storyboards.

Black Magic M-66 is released through Manga Entertainment, in dubbed English, and retails for an affordable $14.95. It does have a few rough words, so *caveat emptor*.

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TOYING around • around • around • around

WITH SEAN AUNE

MORE FROM TOY FAIR

If you thought last month had all there is to tell about Toy Fair '95...

Star Wars

At long last the *Star Wars* rumors can be confirmed. Kenner does have the license and will be issuing figures and vehicles based on the original movies. Unfortunately, no pictures are being released at this time and the press is not being allowed to view the products yet at the request of Lucasfilms.

The figures currently slated for release are Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader, C-3PO, R2-D2, Stormtrooper, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Han Solo, and Chewbacca. These figures are said to be more muscular looking then the original ones released in the '70s and '80s. The actual amount of articulation that they will have is still up in the air.

Of course, these figures will need some way to get around, so Kenner will also be producing a few vehicles. Luke's original Land Speeder will be zooming around, along with the newly detailed TIE-Fighter and X-Wing. And, of course, the Millennium Falcon will once again be making the Kessel Run in less than 12 parsecs.

Batman

Kenner will continue the popular Legends of Batman series this year with new alternate universe versions of Batman and Robin. Yumpin' yimminy—Viking Batman will strike down villains with his sweeping broad ax and shield, while Samurai Batman will cut down enemies with his slashing sword action. Continuing in the same vein as last year's "KnightQuest" Batman, will be the "KnightsEnd" Batman with disc torpedo launcher. Longbow Batman comes armed with a longbow, three arrows, and a quiver, while Dark Warrior Batman is equipped with slashing mace and shield. Crusader Robin joins the fun with his crossbow and shield to help him battle the Riddler armed with a riddle launcher.

Deluxe Batman figures, which are basically the same figures with much bigger backpacks and accessories, will also join in the fight this year. Flightpack Batman is armed with a laser and wings that switch from combat mode to flight mode. Silver Knight Batman will be equipped with a chopping broad sword and mace while Desert Knight Batman will have a dual whirling sword action.

KnightsEnd Batman (top) and Viking Batman

More Batman figures will be added to the Animated Series line this year. The new sub-division of Crime Squad picks up some new recruits with Ski Blast Robin who's equipped with land skis and blaster backpack. Sea Claw Batman's pivoting claw arm will pick up villains and Piranha Blade Batman will use his shield cape, firing buzz saw blade, and protective helmet to get the upper hand on the bad guys. Meanwhile, Stealthwing Batman will fly overhead with his stealthwings and smoke bombs.

The standard Animated figures will have a few new additions including Bola Trap Robin with spinning bola weapon and Glider Robin who can descend upon his prey. Cyber Gear Batman is ready for action with his cyber cape back rig, power leg struts, and cyber launcher. Radar Scope Batman will need to use his wrap-around radar shield cape, smoke bombs, and overhead missile launcher when he battles Bane, who has body slamming arms and venom tube.

Congo

Michael Crichton, author of the hit novel-turned-movie *Jurassic Park*, returns to the screen with his new film *Congo*. Based on the best-selling book, the story follows the adventures of an expedition team whose mission is to find the lost City of Zinj and its legendary diamond mines. During the journey, the group is stalked and attacked by ferocious mutant apes trained to protect the lost city and its riches.

The toy line by Kenner features Karen Ross, leader of the team, who comes armed with an ultra laser cannon and power diamond. Monroe is equipped with capture claw and surprise attack blaster, while gorilla expert Peter Elliot comes prepared with his night sight backpack and tracer assault weapon. Amy is an extremely intelligent gorilla who comes

All Batman figures ™ & © DC Comics. Background Art ™ & © Eclipse.

equipped with a special backpack that enables her to communicate with humans. Kahega is the strongest of the humans and is armed with a bazooka and blaster which he'll need to defend himself. Mangle, Blast Face, and Genghis are three of the Zinj apes. They have glow-in-the-dark eyes and teeth, and can grip human figures in their gnarled hands.

The deluxe figure assortment, which includes larger accessories, will include Monroe heavily armed with a missile launcher, removable backpack, and a wild attack monkey. Bonecrusher will have a primal scream, glow-in-the-dark eyes, and is ready for the attack.

The Trail Hacker vehicle will transport the team through the jungle with a tethered grappling hook that launches from the missile blaster mounted on the roll bar. If a hero gets injured you can strap him or her to the side stretcher. The Net Trap Vehicle is an off-road, All-Terrain Vehicle. Pull on the rear of the vehicle and the net trap flips over to cover and immobilize its prey. The car also comes equipped with blasters over the rear fenders and seats two.

Samurai Batman (top) and Riddler.

Mattel

The folks at Mattel noted at Toy Fair that they have spent many years trying to regain a hold on what is known as the boys action figures market since the demise of the "Masters of the Universe" line. This year, the company is trying again with the launch of its new "Mega Heroes" line. The product line will be made up of multiple comic book lines. The first year of release will consist of a Judge Dredd and Cyberforce line. Both series will be die-cast 1 1/2- to 2 1/2-inch-tall figures. Unlike die-cast figures of the past, these will have some articulated parts. They will not be fully articulated, but *some* movement is definitely better than none.

All the figures will come packaged in "ready-to-battle" sets. This is a form of packaging that will put good and bad guys in the same set, making playing with them easier. Exactly who will come in each pack has not yet been determined.

The Cyberforce figures are: Ballistic, Buzzcut, Cyblade, Heatwave, Impact, Killjoy, Megawatt, Mekadom, Psychotron, Ripclaw, Ripclaw II, S.H.O.C. Troop, Stryker, Stryker II, Stryker III, T.I.M.M.I.E., and Velocity. Sorry, no photos were available at press time.

The Cyberforce playset is a subplex playset with a working elevator, missile-firing, spring-loaded weapons, a Cybernetic surgery station, docking station, and an escape pod. Vehicles include Mega Cybercopter, Mega Jumpjet, Ripclaw Cybercycle with sculpted-on Ripclaw figure, and Stryker Cybercycle with sculpted-on Stryker figure.

The Judge Dredd line will see ABC Robot, Block War Dredd, Chief, Justice Fargo, Cursed Earth Mutant, Fergie, Fink Angel, Judge Death, Judge Dredd & Mark IV Lawmaster, Lawgiver Dredd, Mean Machine, Angel, Rico, Riot Armor Dredd, Squad Leader Judge Hunter, Street Judge Hershey, Ugly Pugley, and Under City Perp.

The Dredd playsets are Ambush Alley, Block Wars, and Hall of Justice with transforming Lawmaster Supersonic Jet.

Star Trek

Star Trek: The Next Generation may be over as a television show, but the toy line is as strong as ever. The 5-inch action figures will continue this year with a lot of alternate figure versions. All the following are due this year: Admiral Riker, Geordi LaForge, Governor Worf, and Jean-Luc Picard all from "All Good Things," Beverly Crusher and Data both in 1940s Attire, Borg with Firing Cybernetic Arm, Captain Jean-Luc Picard as Galen, Commander Riker and Lieutenant Commander LaForge both with Firing Phaser Rifle, Deanna Troi as Durango (Western attire), Dr. Katherine Pulaski, Lieutenant Worf with Spring-powered Arm, Picard as Locutus with Vacuum-Metallized Detail, the Traveler, Vash, Worf in Ritual Klingon Attire with Vacuum-Metallized Detail, and Worf as Western Sheriff with Alexander as Western Deputy.

Playmates will also be producing some 7- and 9-inch figures this year. The 7-inch figures will be talking figures featuring the actual actors' voices. The talkers so far are Riker, Q, Picard, and Borg. The 9-inch figures will be like the command series of last year—they'll be a mix from the Classic series, *Next Generation*, and *Deep Space Nine*. The figures are: Borg, Chief Miles O'Brien, Commander Deanna Troi, Commander William Riker, Dr. Beverly Crusher, Dr. Leonard McCoy (Classic series), Guinan, Kirk in Dress Uniform (Classic series), Lieutenant Commander Data, Lieutenant Commander Geordi LaForge, Lieutenant Jadzia Dax, Lieutenant Uhura (Classic series), Lieutenant Worf in Ritual Klingon Attire, Major Kira Nerys, Picard in Dress Uniform, Q, Scotty (Classic series), Security Chief Odo, and Spock (Classic series).

Playmates will be entering the mini-die-cast figure arena this year with its "Chromium Collector Series." These will be 3-inch articulated die-cast figures with stylized bases and fully illustrated backgrounds. The figures slated for production this year are: Borg, Captain James T. Kirk, Captain Jean-Luc Picard, Chief Engineer Scott, Chief Miles O'Brien, Commander Benjamin Sisko, Commander William Riker, Communications Specialist Uhura, Counselor Deanna Troi, Dr. Beverly Crusher, Dr. Leonard McCoy, Helmsman Sulu, Lieutenant Jadzia Dax, Lieutenant Commander Data, Lieutenant Commander Geordi LaForge, Lieutenant Commander Worf, Mr. Spock, Odo, Q, and Quark.

In the new Innerspace line that was introduced in 1994, there will soon be tons of new entries. The U.S.S. Enterprise NCC-1701-D playset is a 10-and-a-half-inch

All Batman figures ™ & © DC Comics.

replica that includes mini-figures of Picard, Data, and Riker. The playset will have separate play environments including Command Bridge, Ten Forward Lounge, Captain's Ready Room, Brig, and Shuttlebay with mini-shuttle.

Other entries into this line include: Ferengi Marauder with Ferengi and Picard, Cardassian Warship with Gul Dukat and Data, U.S.S. Hood NCC-42296 with Riker and LaForge in first season uniforms, Klingon Attack Cruiser with Worf in Ritual Attire and K'Ehleyr, and Borg II Ship with Hugh Borg and Borg.

And as the Innerspace line continues, Playmates itself will continue onward with an Away Team Gear assortment. The Type II Phaser will open up to reveal an alien planet and will include mini-figures of Worf, Data, and Q. The Medical Tricorder will open up to reveal the Enterprise's medical and bio labs. This set will include mini-figures of Geordi, Dr. Crusher, and Picard as Locutus. There will also be a communicator that opens up to reveal a transporter playset that will make your mini-figures "disappear." This set will also come with two mini-figures that have yet to be named.

Starfleet Space Tech will be a set of four separate Innerspace modules that can be played with separately or can be fitted together to form a cross-section of the Enterprise D. Each set will come with three mini-figures (which haven't been announced yet). The sets are: Holodeck/Officer's Living Quarters, Main Shuttlebay/Conference Lounge, Battle Bridge/Photon Torpedo Bay, and Main Engineering/Reactor Core.

The Classic *Star Trek* line continues with new figures. These will be the same size as the standard *Next Generation* figures. The production list, so far, contains: Admiral James T. Kirk from the first movie, Commander Kruge from *Star Trek VI*, Communications Officer Uhura, Dr. Leonard H. McCoy from the first movie, General Chang from *ST VI*, Hikaru Sulu from the first movie, Khan from *ST II*, Mr. Spock from the first movie, Saavik from *ST II*, and Shape Shifter from *ST VI*.

Top from left: Evil Tongue Thrakkorzog, Skippy the Propellerized Robot Dog, and Mucus Tick. Bottom from left: Twist and Chop American Maid, Hurling Tick, and Color Changing Chameleon.

From left: "I Dig Dinosaur Neil" Tick, Natural Tick, "I Love Wheat" Tick, and Tourist Tick.

There will also be a *Voyager* line this year, but no exact info was given, except for the fact that along with the figures there will be a replica of the ship.

The Tick

Bandai America will continue with its popular Tick toys based on the Saturday morning cartoon and comic book character this year. Six more action figures will be added to the mix this year which include four new good guys. Twist and Chop American Maid will be teaming up with the Color Changing Chameleon to aid the Tick in his battle against evil. And the Tick himself returns with new Hurling Action Tick and Mucus Oozing Tick! Who will the good guys fight? Why, two new bad guys named Evil Tongue Thrakkorzog and Skippy, the Propellerized Robot Dog!

Two playsets will be produced for the six-inch figures. First up will be the ominous sounding "The Steel Box." When closed it looks like an ordinary steel box (yeah, sounds like fun), but when you open it there will be several "tests of fortitude" waiting for the Tick such as a circular saw, spinning drills, and much more! Then the Tick can bound away to the Rooftop Fortress playset which will feature both a rooftop play area and the interior of Arthur's apartment. This set will feature a breakaway roof edge, secret passages, and tons more thrills!

Six-inch Tick Talkers will make up a new division of the toy line. Each figure will be wearing a different outfit over the normal Tick costume and will say a certain phrase from an episode of the cartoon. The four figures are "I Dig Dino Neil" Tick and "I Love Wheat!" Tick both with matching T-shirts, Tourist Tick with Hawaiian shorts, and Natural Tick.

The growing trend of micro-playsets with mini-figures has made its way to the Tick's City. There will be three sets with three figures each. First up will be Arthur's Apartment with Tick, Arthur, and Dean. One can't spend all day lounging around the apartment though, so it's out to the City playset you go. This set will include a built-in Dinosaur Neil that can't be removed, but will have moving arms so as to attack the included Tick, Man Eating Cow, and Human Bullet figures. Finally, the City Streets playset will let you watch the battle at street level as the Tick, American Maid, and Die Fledermaus take on Chairface Chippendale.

The new toy lines for the year just keep popping out of the woodwork so keep your eyes peeled right here! Until then, see you in aisle 7C.

Sean Aune is a freelance writer and owner of Splash Page Comics and Toys, a store in Kirksville, Mo.

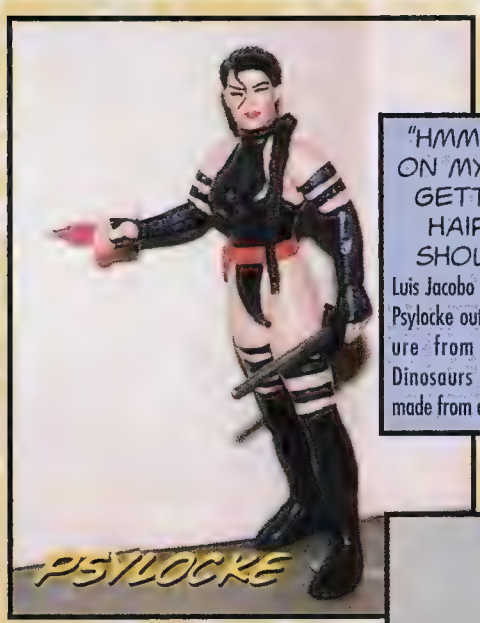
All Tick figures ™ & © Ben Edlund

WEAPON ZERO™
SIMONSON • BENITEZ • BATT
TOP COW
BALLISTIC STUDIOS
WEAPON ZERO ™& © TOP COW Productions Inc. 1995 All Artwork © 1995 TOP COW Productions Inc. All Rights Reserved.

HOMEMADE HEROES

For this special "Bad Girls Edition" of H.H., we've got lotsa neato prizes. Everyone whose figure sees print this month wins a copy of *Violator* #1 signed by Bart Sears and a copy of *The Amazing X-Men* #1 signed by Andy Kubert. The two runner-ups win all of that neat stuff plus a set of the 10-inch Toy Biz Wolverine, Sabretooth, and Cyclops figures, a copy of *Gambit and the Externals* #1 signed by Fabian Nicieza, and a copy of *Ash* #1 signed by Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti. The Grand Prize winner wins alla that stuff *plus* a limited edition, porcelain Wolverine figure by Randy Bowen! **Thanks for the rockin' figure Randy!** Congrats to all!

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.



"HMM...THAT MOLE ON MY SHOULDER'S GETTING PRETTY HAIRY. MAYBE I SHOULD NAIR IT."
Luis Jacobo of San Diego, Calif., made Psylocke out of a Hannah Dundee figure from Tyco's Cadillacs and Dinosaurs line. The psi-blade was made from a red Christmas tree light.

"UH OH, I'M GETTING ALL BLURRY AND OUT-OF-FOCUS. MUST BE ANOTHER DC CROSSOVER."
We've got no idea what Brad McCurry of Shelby, N.C., made Batty out of. But she still looks cool enough for us.

"LOOK HOW ITTY MY HANDS ARE! AND MY FEET ARE POSITIVELY LITTLE! WHAT BAD GUY'S GONNA TAKE ME SERIOUSLY?"
Phil Griffith of Van Nuys, Calif., crafted Domino from some sort of Shani doll.

"GIMME AN M... GIMME AN O..."
Made from a benign Barbie doll, this human weapon hails from Ron Rogers of Wyoming, Pa.

"MYSTIQUE? NO, MY NAME'S PAUL. WANNA DANCE?"
Mystique here was made from a Toy Biz Storm by the hands of Trevor Ellis of Brockton, Mass.

Batgirl ™ & © DC Comics. Kitana ™ & © Midway/Bally. Mystique, Psylocke, and Domino ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

"HEY, PUDDIN', I'M SPEECHLESS."

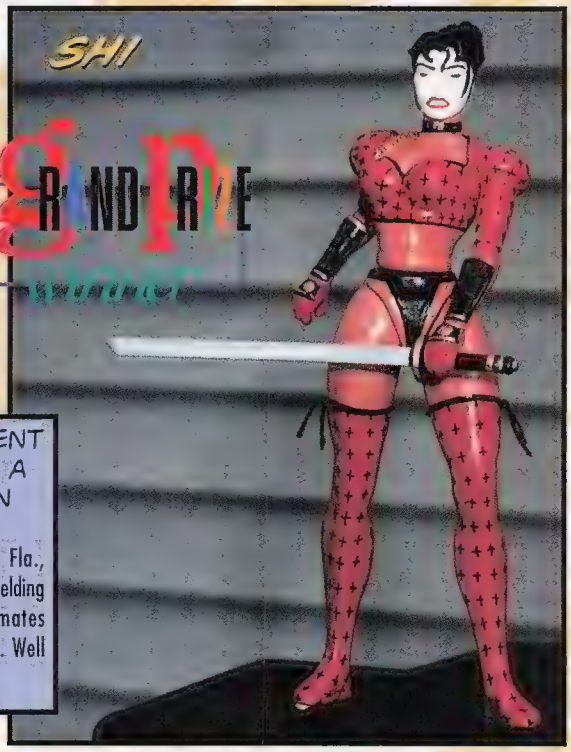
Can you believe Miss Quinn was made from a Playmates *ST:TNG* Sela head, a *ST: Generations* Beverly Crusher body, and *ST: DS9* Kira Nerys limbs? This one comes from John-Paul Laydera of Elmhurst, N.Y.

"NOW PREPARE FOR BATTLE VILL...IS IT ME, OR IS IT COLD IN HERE? BRRR..."

Boy, them Legends of Batman Catwoman figures sure are popular 'round these parts! Jeffrey Hunt of South Berwick, Maine, made Zorro's *femme fatale* outta one.

"MUST...FIGHT... GRAVITY..."

Lann Snell of Ft. Worth, Texas, made Lady Death from a Kenner Legends of Batman Catwoman figure with a cape from Skeleton Warriors' Prince Lightstar.



"SIGH. A MOMENT ON THE LIPS, A LIFETIME ON THE HIPS."

Thomas Lotz of Naples, Fla., made Bill Tucci's sword-wielding warrior from a Playmates WildC.A.T.s Zealot figure. Well done, Thomas!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well-lit, clear, color photographs (again, no Polaroids!) to:

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Harley Quinn ™ & © DC Comics. Lady Death ™ & © Brian Pulido. Lady Rawhide ™ & © Zorro Productions, Inc. Shi ™ & © William Elliott Tucci.

POWER UP!

By Steve Brown

It's Back!

It's new. It's improved. Bigger. Better. Bolder. It's Power Up, the video game column, and it's back in *Wizard*. You, the reader, asked for more breaking news on video games, more previews, and more advance information on upcoming games. And you asked for it in the style that only *Wizard* can deliver. Well, here it is...

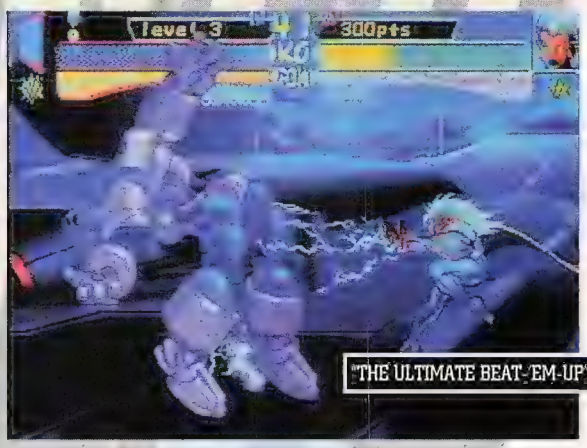
Taking the 32X Out For a Spin

The generous folks at Sega donated a 32X to test drive and here are our initial findings. The 32X is a lock-on upgrade for your Sega Genesis, which you must own in order for it to work. The 32X, which currently retails for $149.99, more than doubles your Genesis's power potential. Later this year, Neptune, a combination unit which is basically a Genesis with a built-in 32X, will be released. Sega hopes to retail the Neptune at $200.

The sad news, however, is that the 32X has made the underachieving Sega CD system obsolete, with most major game developers shifting their focus to other systems. Of the early first generation games we sampled, *Doom* really stood out, but word is that these early games don't even begin to tap the 32X's awesome potential. *Star Wars Arcade*, *Cosmic Carnage*, and *Motocross* really felt like 16-bit games that were jazzed up for release with the system, which is pretty typical of first generation games. Consider waiting until a wider selection of software is available; we'll let you know all about the good ones as soon they come out.

SPAWN: The Video Game

Todd Toys has announced a licensing agreement with Sony Imagesoft to develop Spawn video games! The new Spawn games will be produced for SNES, Genesis, Macintosh based CD-ROMs, and the Sony Playstation. "Sony Imagesoft's enthusiasm and dedication to the project has been overwhelming," said Todd McFarlane. "With our close collaboration on all aspects of these games, I'm confident that the character and the world of Spawn will be something computer and video game fans will thoroughly enjoy." Considering the effort Todd has put into his action figure line, loyal followers of his monthly title are definitely in for a treat. The various titles are scheduled to ship in fall 1995.



"THE ULTIMATE BEAT-'EM-UP"

Killer X-Men Arcade Fighter

Capcom has combined the popularity of comic book action and one-on-one, interactive electronic fighting to bring the ultimate beat-'em-up game to an arcade near you. Pitted against each other in a *Mortal Kombat*-type atmosphere, it's every mutant for themselves. Whether an expert or beginner player, *X-Men* features an auto-blocking option, which allows novice players to challenge pro-level gamers. Through a good

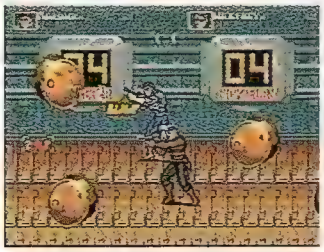
SEGA'S 32X UPGRADE DOUBLES YOUR POWER AND GIVES YOU GAMES LIKE *STAR WARS* ARCADE (INSET).

amount of skill-and tons of quarters-players can achieve three different levels of special "X" power that will help them build strength and execute even more incredible moves.

Gorillas in the Midst

Unbelievably, Nintendo's *Donkey Kong Country* accounted for 70 percent of all SNES cartridges sold over the holiday season! Wow—talk about market share. If you plan on selling your used copy, do it now—with a huge production run like that, it won't hold its monetary value much longer.

Punisher Game Finally Released



After numerous false starts and delays, Capcom has finished the Punisher video game for the Genesis. And it's just in time for Marvel's title wide cancellation of all Punisher comic books. With interest in Mr. Castle at an all-time low, this game looks to be a limited release.

Acclaim/Marvel Team Up

Acclaim has obtained exclusive rights to publish interactive software titles based on Marvel's live-action movie and TV properties. Characters included in the deal are Spider-Man, Fantastic Four, Hulk, Luke Cage, Blade, and Ghost Rider.

Marvel's animated properties are presumably not affected, although Acclaim already owns the rights to the Spidey cartoon video game. It truly is the Golden Age of comic book video gaming.

Mega Man: Television Star?

Mega Man, the #1 syndicated, animated TV series, returns for a second season; 13 brand new episodes are now in production. Count Chocula be damned, today's kids will watch anything! ☆

Steve Brown is a video game expert and vice-president at Schinders, a 13-store hobby chain based in Minneapolis, Minn. In his pursuit of video game excellence, he has collected 400 Atari 2600 games, which still leaves him 500 short of the complete set. Let him know what you think about this column, or help him round out his Atari 2600 collection, by writing to Power Up, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY, 10920.

Preview

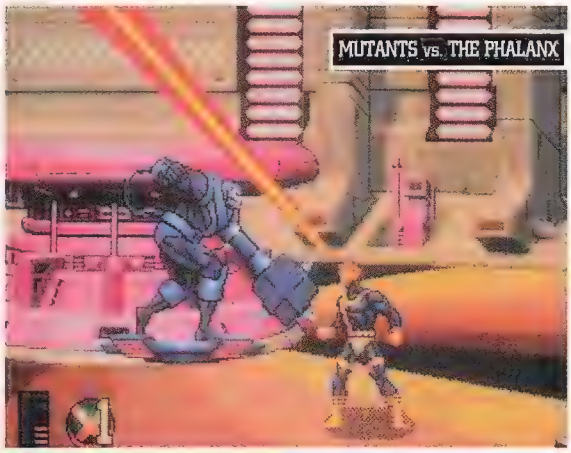
ADVENTURES OF BATMAN AND ROBIN

Gotham's finest return to the Sega Genesis, courtesy of Sega of America. In this action-packed adventure, the heat is on for the Dynamic Duo to save Gotham City from being transformed into a diabolical winter wonderland by the evil Mr. Freeze. Look for a full review in future issues of *Wizard*.

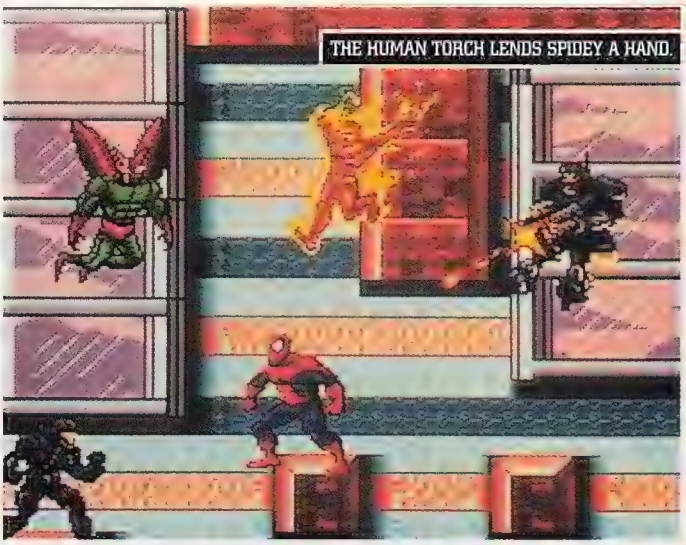
Review

X-MEN 2: CLONE WARS

Genesis gamers rejoice, Sega has put together a worthy sequel to one of the company's best selling titles ever. This time out, Marvel's merriest mutants: Wolverine, Beast, Nightcrawler, Psylocke, Gambit, and Magneto are pitted against the Phalanx, alien life forms composed of infective circuitry. Play it solo, or in a two-player cooperative mode. *Clone Wars* is a side-scrolling adventure with top notch graphics and extremely



tight controls. *X-Men 2* effectively combines the fight game feel with a quest-type adventure. It's similar to the original only in difficulty—it's hard. All characters have been upgraded with more dynamic movements, attacks, and control.



Review

SPIDER-MAN ANIMATED

Spider-Man for the SNES and Sega Genesis by Acclaim is yet another superhero platform game. We can only dream that one day programmers will give this genre something beyond side-scrolling fighting games. Super Nintendo's version is the one we tested, and it is superior to *Maximum Carnage*, Acclaim's '94 blockbuster. Gone are the repetitious villains and predictable gameplay. There's good variety with graphics of your enemies, who all have different attacks. Not only are the level drones more interesting, *Spider-Man* has over 16 different classic Spidey supervillains: Lizard, Green Goblin, Venom, Doctor Octopus, Spencer Smythe the Spider Slayer, Hobgoblin, Mysterio, et al. The game's plot sees a major breakout at Ravencroft, the maximum security prison for superbaddies, creating chaos for our wall-crawler. With so many archenemies on the loose, Spider-Man can call on the Fantastic Four for help. Special character icons pop up from time to time, allowing for a brief "Marvel Team-Up" between Spidey and Reed, Sue, Ben, or Johnny. Overall, *Spider-Man* is an excellent example of its type of game, but its similar qualities to existing superhero games will leave you wanting.

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PALMER'S PICKS

Tomine's Tales

It is almost impossible to ignore the fact that Adrian Tomine, the artist behind *Optic Nerve*, is only 20 years old. You'd think that by now he would be sick of people making such a big deal about his age, but he doesn't seem to mind. "If it's just as a side-note to describe me, then that's fine," Tomine explains. But Tomine is bothered when reviews of his work say that he's incredibly talented for a 20-year-old. Tomine has a much more humble view of his abilities. To him, he simply draws comics that any other 20-year-old in his position would.

Tomine started *Optic Nerve* at the ripe old age of 17 as a self-published mini-comic. His early comics gathered a lot of attention, and got him work in such high-profile magazines as *Pulse* (a publication of the Tower Records store chain) and *Details*. As Tomine describes it, "One of the editors [at *Pulse*] was a big comics fan. He saw my stuff, called me up, and gave me the job, basically. Then the editor from *Details* saw my stuff in there, and as a result of that, he called *Pulse* and talked to me and got me a job in *Details*. So it was just kind of like this chain reaction of people seeing stuff in different places."

Tomine didn't neglect his mini-comic while moonlighting for the "Big Guys." He refined and honed his skills over seven issues of *Optic Nerve*, along with help from a grant from the Xeric Foundation (for issue #7). While Tomine's work evolved over each issue, there is a startling increase in maturity between the sixth and seventh issues. Tomine explains that he spent more time on the seventh. "It was almost a year between #6 and #7, so a lot of evolution took place. There was stuff I did and completely threw out."

This harsh self-criticism came about because Tomine became more serious about his comic work. "There was a lot of time where I was just coasting through. I thought, 'I have all the knowledge I need to do comics. I can do fine comics.' But then I started looking more critically at my stuff and I [realized], 'I need to learn about anatomy and I need to learn about perspective.' So, between six and seven, I really got a lot of lessons from other artists and from books."

All of this hard work seems to have paid off. An all-new *Optic Nerve* series is now published as a full-size anthology comic by Drawn & Quarterly Publications (the first issue came out in March). The attention surrounding Tomine—including a large number of college-age fans—can be attributed to his prodigious talent. Not one panel (or even one line) is wasted on inconsequential details. His unique, concise drawing style is coupled with a distinctive narrative voice. You can't mistake an Adrian Tomine story for anything else; his realistic comics have a somber air about them, and are peopled with characters broken and worn down from love and life. He has his finger perfectly on what it means to come of age in the '90s.

Adrian Tomine's realistic comics have a somber air about them, and are peopled with characters broken and worn down from love and life.

The new, full-size *Optic Nerve* is distinguished from the mini-comic version by its lack of direct autobiographical stories. With this change, Tomine hopes to take his work in a different direction. "There are no characters in this that are supposed to be exactly me. I'm not drawing myself, and I'm not recording the events verbatim as they happen."

Tomine has found some advantages to writing fictional stories. "When I started to make this decision to move into fiction, I found that I ended up being able to write stuff that is actually more revealing or more honest about myself than the straight autobio. By veiling it in fiction, I can delve a little deeper into myself.

"On the surface, most people would read it as fiction, but different people who know me or different people who are sort of involved with the inspiration for these stories will definitely see their origins from my real life."

Tomine explains some other benefits of fictional stories. "It also makes for better stories. When I was doing autobio stuff I was really thinking, 'Well, I have to show it exactly like it really happened,' and usually that doesn't

Cover art from *Optic Nerve* #1.

Above: The ambivalent Jeanette.
Top: Space Boy.

make for a good read. Sometimes it does, but sometimes you have to belabor details that the reader just doesn't care about. So right now, my criteria is just to tell a good story, and if that means relying on something that really happened to me, that's fine. If it means really departing from it and fictionalizing it, then that's fine, too. I just want it to be interesting."

Unlike most artists with their own comic books, Tomine has to find time to work on his art between classes at college. An English major at the University of California, Berkeley, Tomine is able to squeeze in time for *Optic Nerve*, "by cutting out all social and fun activities. I go to school during the day and then sit at my drawing board until 3 or 4 in the morning. It's the only way I can get it all done."

Tomine is definitely having a different college experience from his friends and roommates. "They have a lot of free time to watch TV and go to parties and talk and sit around, and I just use a lot of that time to work on my comic. It doesn't make for a very fun friend or boyfriend or anything."

Tomine is also unlike several comic artists in another way: he has long-term goals in sight. "It might be fun for a night to sit and get drunk and watch TV with your friends, but in the long run, that night isn't going to amount to anything. But maybe I might have finished drawing a page of comics that will stay in print for a long time. You just have to make decisions. Maybe when I'm 30, I'll regret having lived these years as I have, but it's gotten me to a lot of places that have really made me happy."

All of this dedication and hard work put into *Optic Nerve* distinguishes Tomine from the typical college student. Let's face it—how many people his age have their own comic book? But if you ask Adrian, he'll pose a different question: "How many people my age would *want* to have their own comic book?" ☆

The freelance writer formerly known as Tom Palmer Jr. has changed his name to an unpronounceable combination of a yield sign and the Nike logo.

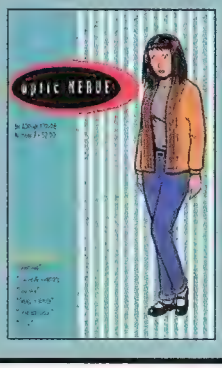
PICK OF THE MONTH

***Action Girl Comics #3*—**Don't be fooled by the title of this anthology edited by Sarah Dyer from Slave Labor Graphics. You don't have to be a girl to like *Action Girl Comics*. With excellent work from Megan Kelso, Ariel Bordeaux, Jessica Abel, Elizabeth Watasin, and others, it's hard to pass up the new issue of this thoroughly enjoyable anthology.

Adrian Tomine's Recommended Reading: Adrian says his favorite comics right now are some of the best of 'regular' comics and mini-comics. "I'm equally into both. For the real comics, my list would have to be *Love and Rockets*, *Eightball*, *Acme Novelty Library*, *Dirty Plotte*, *Peepshow*, *Palooka-Ville*, and *Hate*. For mini-comics, which I enjoy almost as much, I'm really into *Deep Girl* [Ariel Bordeaux, 573 Scott St. Apt. L, San Francisco, CA 94177], *King Cat* [John Porcellino, PO Box 18510, Denver, CO 80218], *Girl Hero* [Megan Kelso, 4505 University Way NE Box 536, Seattle, WA 98105], and *S'of Boy* [Archer Prewitt, 1723 West Julian No. 2R, Chicago, IL 60622]. Those are my main faves right now."

Tom's Recommended Reading

***Optic Nerve*:** The first issue of the full-size *Optic Nerve* was released in March from Drawn & Quarterly Publications. If you frequent a quality comic book store, they should still have copies, but if your local shop doesn't, you'll have to order directly from the publisher. Just write a check or money order for $2.95 postpaid (or $8.95 for a four-issue subscription) to Drawn & Quarterly Publications, 5550 Jeanne-Mance Street #16, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4K6. *Optic Nerve* is a collection of short, self-contained stories, so you can pick up any issue and enjoy. The first issue features "Sleepwalk," a long story detailing what happens when Mark spends his 24th birthday with his ex-girlfriend, Carrie. Other stories in the issue include "Echo Avenue," which concerns living in a big city and dealing with voyeuristic neighbors; "Long Distance," a story about a relationship split across the country; "Lunchbreak," which flashes back to the '50s; and a one-pager set in Japan called "Drop."



***Optic Nerve* mini-comic:** Consider yourself extremely lucky if you can find the early issues of the *Optic Nerve* mini-comic. The seventh, and final, issue featured a color cardstock cover and is still available from Drawn & Quarterly for $2, but the others are quite rare. Don't kill yourself hunting down Adrian's mini-comics, because Drawn & Quarterly will publish a book collecting most of the mini-comics in the fall of this year.

Optic Nerve and all characters shown ™ & © Adrian Tomine

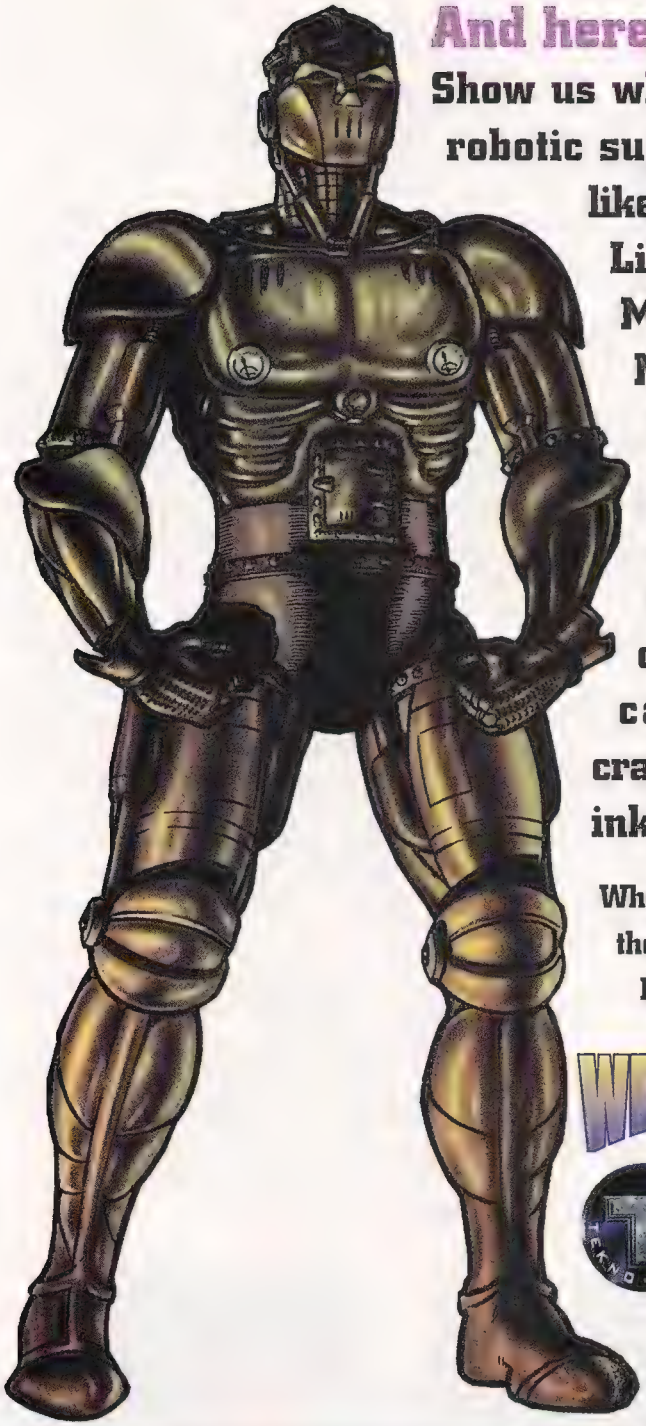
CONTESTS

Holdin' Out for Mr. Hero!

Your buds at Tekno-Comix and Wizard Press have put their noggins together and come up with a way to get some primo, spiffy original art and comics into your sci-fi-lovin' hands. Here's what you can get:

Grand Prize (One winner)

An original cover sketch by *Mr. Hero*'s artist Ted Slampyak, a Tekno-Comix collection consisting of *Neil Gaiman's Mr. Hero—The Newmatic Man* #1-#4, *Leonard Nimoy's Primortals* #1-#4, and *Gene Roddenberry's Lost Universe* #1-#4, plus a sharp-lookin' Tekno-Comix T-shirt!



And here's how to win!

Show us what you think Tekno's favorite robotic superstar, Mr. Hero, would look like if he were from a different era. Like, what would a Cro-Magnon Mr. Hero look like? Or a groovin' Mr. Hero from the stylin' '70s? Any time period is fair game—past, present, or future. Your art entry should be on a sheet of 8" x 11 1/4" unlined paper or posterboard, and the art itself can be in any medium—oils, crayon, line art, jelly, etc.—but neon inks will not print (Sorry!).

When you're done with that whole thing, fill out the official entry coupon below, attach it to the back of your good-lookin' art entry, and then mail the whole mess off to:

WIZARD®

Mr. Hero Contest
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

TEKNO COMIX

As usual, we're lookin' for original, creative ideas, not just incredible masterpieces of art! And keep in mind that this contest expires July 31, 1995, so put the pedal to the metal!

ENTRIES DUE BY JULY 31, 1995!

LEGAL GIBBERISH

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Tekno•Comix, their immediate families, and anybody who makes a crack about this being a Mr. Hero illustrated contest. We never mention those guys. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card, and attach the form or card to the back of your art entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Mr. Hero Contest, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Try guacamole on a B.L.T. sandwich. Kicks ass. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 31, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Wizard Press will select the winner based on the creativity, originality, and quality of the submitted artwork. The judging will be conducted on August 1, 1995 by Wizard Press.

For the winner's name, available after August 18, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Mr. Hero Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

Mr. Hero & Tekno•Comix logo ™ & © BIG Entertainment

MR. HERO CONTEST

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE DATE OF BIRTH

the Wizard of Cards

By Stephen Shamus

As you've probably read in our news section already, Fleer has purchased SkyBox. How will this affect collectors? Well, in the near future, practically everything seems to be coming out as scheduled from both Fleer and SkyBox, so we'll continue to cover it as such. And how will this affect the entertainment card

Magical Revisions

industry? Time will tell, as other manufacturers have some big decisions to make. Since you've already heard the news, let's get going with the latest and greatest.

This summer, Wizards of the Coast, makers of the hugely successful game *Magic: The Gathering*, is releasing a series that will make game players ecstatic and collectors slightly steamed. The series, entitled *Chronicles*, will consist of close to 100 cards from past *Magic* expansion sets, including *Arabian Nights*, *Antiquities*, *Legends*, and *The Dark*. *Fallen Empires* will not be included in this series, as WotC felt it was too early to re-release any cards from that expansion. This will be an unlimited product, and WotC will continue re-printing it for as long as demand justifies it. The main difference between the original cards and the cards in *Chronicles* is that the new cards will have a white border instead of a black one. For collectors, though, demand will certainly be lower on some of those hard-to-find singles that are now available at reasonable prices. *Chronicles* will include common, uncommon, and rare cards, and will be sold in 12-card booster packs for $2.00 each. However, Wizards of the Coast is not re-releasing all the older cards, many of which were just too powerful for the game—like the Black Lotus and the Moxes. This may actually cause those cards to see yet another jump in price. Right now, the powerful Black Lotus card sells for over $125 a pop.

As we discussed last month, Fleer is releasing a card game based on the Marvel Universe. Here's the deal: the set, called Marvel OverPower, will be out around July or August, and will feature totally original, computer-enhanced artwork on playing card stock (with the rounded corners, too!). There are six different starter decks in all; two X-Men, two Foes, and two Heroes decks. You can purchase game guides (which teach the game) separately or through a special offer via Fleer Ultra Spider-Man cards (see below), and the text for each is written in the first person by a spokesperson for that group (i.e., Gambit for the X-Men decks, Venom for the Foes decks, and the Thing for the Heroes decks). The 55-card starter decks have a suggested retail of $5.95, and 10-card boosters will sell for $1.49 each. On to the rules: Only two players can play at one time, and the object of the game is to make your opponent lose all of his/her power. There are three categories of character-enhancing cards in play: Power Cards (energy, fighting, and strength), Universe (chains, guns, knives), and Specials (defend or enhance an attack). All other info is unavailable at this time, but we'll probably have info on limited cards and the final counts next month. There will be booster packs to help enhance the game in the future, but nothing is set in stone yet.

In June, Fleer is releasing its second Spider-Man set, but instead of issuing it under its original Marvel Cards brand, it has now been switched to the Fleer Ultra name. This set is said to be the most interesting of the Marvel releases, as it features what has currently been going on in the Marvel storyline right up through the month of May. Some subsets feature interesting card back text as it would be written in longhand by the characters. For instance, the Venom subset features text on the back of each card by Eddie Brock, but as he changes from himself to Venom, the writing morphs with him into the handwriting of Venom.

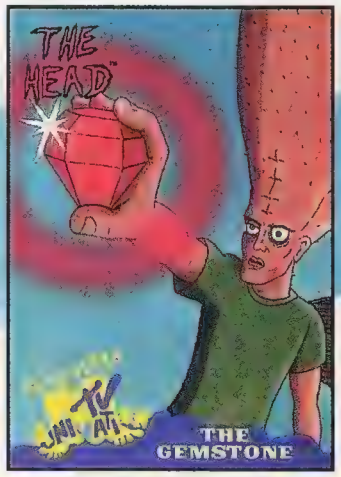
A little more information has come to light on the new Batman Metal cards from Fleer. The set number is still undetermined, but will be about 100 cards. All other specs are still not final, but here's the current status: there are four chase sets in all: Silver Flashers, Gold Blasters, Holograms, and Movie Preview Cards. The 3-D Holograms, four in all, come packed one in 18 packs; Silver Flashers are foil parallel versions of every card in the set and come one in every pack; eight Movie Preview Cards come one in six packs; and 10 Gold Blasters come one in every three packs. Eight-card packs will set you back $2.99 each.

™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

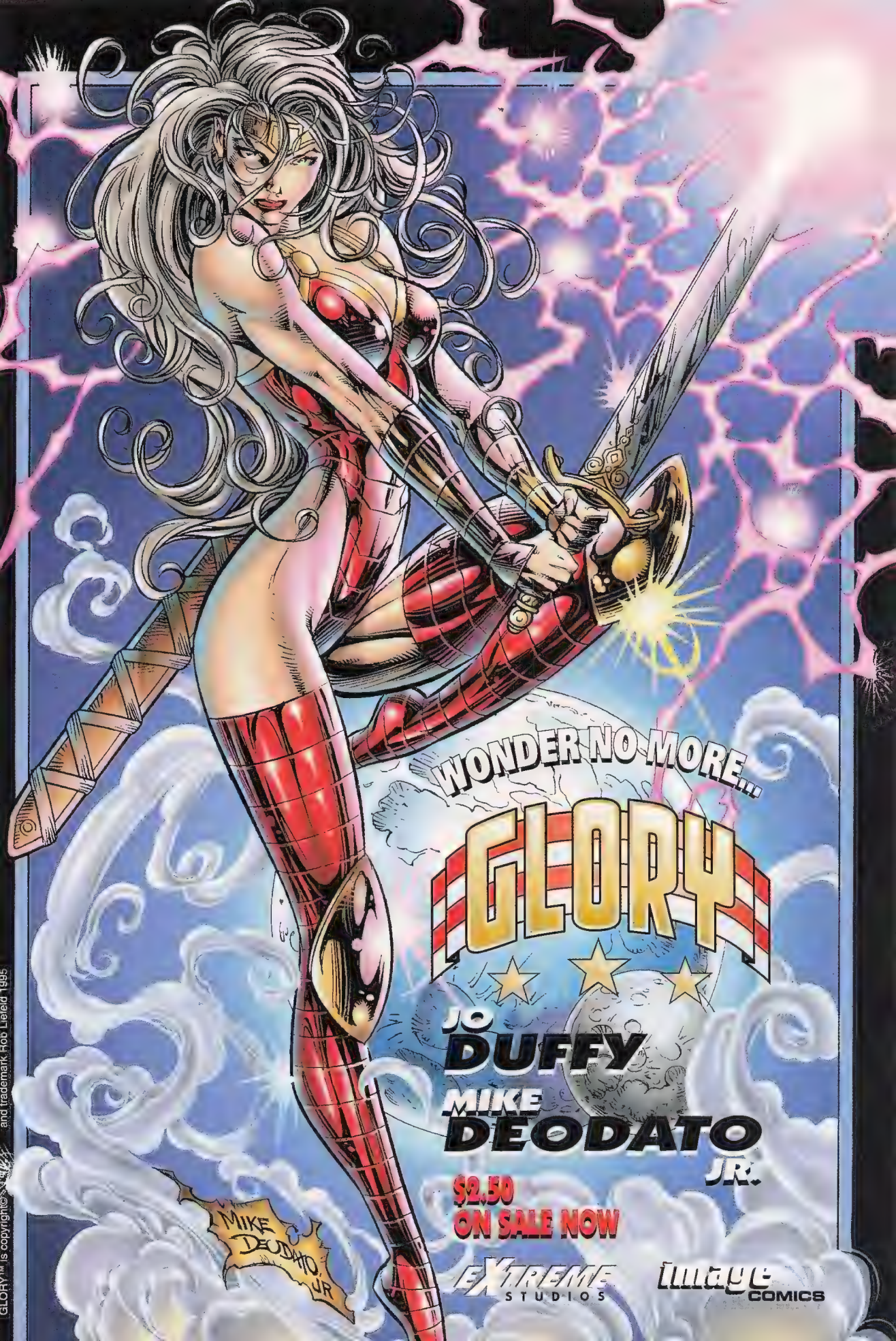
™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Swing with Spidey and company in June's Fleer Ultra Spider-Man set.

™ & © MTV Networks



The Head and his fellow MTV freaks storm the card market this June.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A set based on the freakish group of MTV Animation characters will be coming out in June, featuring an all-encompassing look at MTV's cartoon characters including Beavis and Butt-Head, the Brothers Grunt, the Head, and the Maxx (from Sam Keith). The set will contain 145 cards covering the four animated shows, with artwork taken from the episodes appearing on TV. There are three chase sets in all, including: Prismatic Foil, an 18-card puzzle depicting all the characters, one in two packs; 15 Chromium cards, featuring Liquid TV's *Aeon Flux*, one in four packs; and four Holograms, found one in 12 packs. These 10-card packs will cost $1.99 each.

There are several other Fleer sets to look forward to later in the year, including a Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers movie card set, slated for mid-June. A card set based on Nickelodeon characters, Real Monsters, is due out later this year, as are X-Men Chromium (October) and a set spotlighting the lovable hit comic book hero and cartoon star, the Tick (October). Harvey Comics, which features such prominent characters as Richie Rich, Casper, and Little Dot, is coming to the card market in October. To round out the year, in November there will be a Winter Holidays set (similar to the Easter set), and in December comes...Marvel Masterpieces '96!

Now onto Fleer's very own SkyBox card sets. ("Fleer's SkyBox sets"—sounds weird, huh?) As discussed last month, SkyBox is producing an all-encompassing Disney set, due out at the end of May. There are 80 cards in the set, along with two animation cel chase cards, one in 36 packs; plus an as-of-yet unknown number of silver screen cards. This set contains a retrospective of the Walt Disney Co., looking back at all the classics including *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, as well as the evolution of characters like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Six-card packs will set you back $1.99 each, but it'll be well worth it for all you Disney historians out there.

In June, the crew at *Star Trek: Voyager* makes its cardboard debut. This series contains 100 cards (a second series of 100 cards is planned for a month or two later), and is a basic introduction to the cast, the spaceships, and the ever-present aliens. Eight-card packs have a suggested retail of $1.29 each. Chase cards include a SkyDisc and an exchange card redeemable for a special SkyMotion card. Cool!

Of course, the next big Disney project, *Pocohontas*, is coming from SkyBox in June. Similar to *The Lion King*, two distinctive sets of *Pocohontas* will be released. A tin set, utilizing the oversized 2 1/2"-by-4 1/2" card format, will be released to hobby shops and Disney stores only. These 90-card sets should be on sale for around $20 a set. The regular version, available everywhere, contains 90 different cards, as well as three different chase sets randomly inserted. You'll find five Dufex foil cards, one in 36 packs; five 3-D Panorama cards, one in nine packs; two Moving Animation cards, one in 90 packs; and 12 Pop-Out cards, one in every pack. Eight-card packs sell for $1.19 each. Also, the Walt Disney Co. is featuring the Pocohontas character and story on the Disney Animation Tour—a 24-city mall display tour—and SkyBox will be distributing an exclusive 10-card preview set all along the tour.

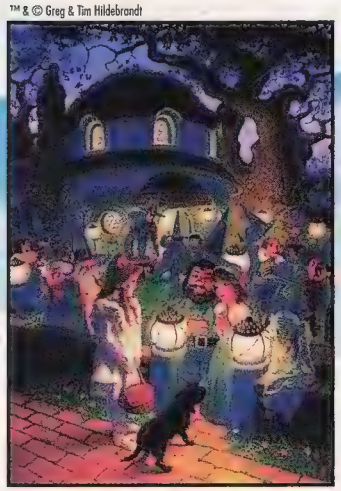
Here's a list of other upcoming projects from SkyBox: The Simpsons Master Series, due out in July, and the SkyBox Master Series Prophet Edition, which stars Extreme Studios's popular hero in mostly Stephen Platt-produced illustrations, due out in August. The rest of this summer's entertainment sets includes the DC Universe Chrome Set, the DC Villains set, and in September, the SkyBox Master Series Creator's Edition, which offers a compilation of five artists' work (Dave Dorman, Brom, Julie Bell, Brian Stelfreeze, and Dave McKean) on all-new original characters, as well as a chase card set (painted by Simon Bisley) to introduce the newest superhero, SkyBox.

Topps is releasing an *Animaniacs* trading card series in June. Yakko, Wakko, and Dot cause trouble all over the Warner Bros. lot, along with other characters from the show, including Slappy Squirrel, the Hip Hippos, Pinky and the Brain, and more. Packs cost 99 cents each and contain eight cards plus one sticker.

Comic Images is coming out with a set entitled Greg & Tim Hildebrandt: Separate & Together All-Chromium Collector Cards, a look at some never-before-seen-on-trading-cards Hildebrandt works. Seven-card packs, due out in May, will sell for around $2.00 per pack. Chase cards include six *Wizard of Oz* MagnaChrome cards, approximately three per box; 500 signed Greg and Tim Hildebrandt cards; a three-card MagnaChrome Robin Hood set, one in four boxes; a Medallion card, one per 12 boxes, and an uncut sheet of six exclusive cards, packed in every 12-box case.

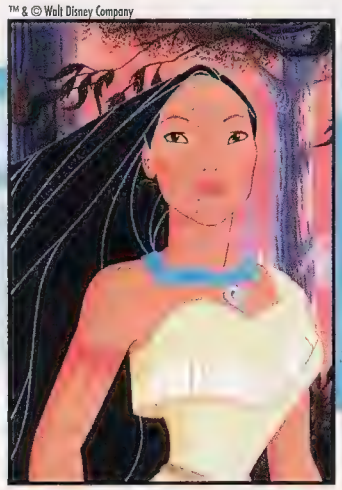
Stephen Shamus, co-publisher of Collector's Sportslook, *is out of here as of this issue, and the* Wizard *staff could not be happier.*

™ & © Greg & Tim Hildebrandt



The Hildebrandts get together again in May's Comic Images set.

™ & © Walt Disney Company



June's *Pocahontas* set, from SkyBox.

™ & © DC Comics

Check out the *Batman Forever* Metal card set from Fleer, coming out soon.

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PREMIERE EDITION
SPIDER-MAN BY PETER SCANLAN
FLEER ULTRA SPIDER-MAN MASTERPIECES
CARNAGE
CARNAGE BY DIMITRI PATELIS
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FLEER ULTRA SPIDER-MAN MASTERPIECES
SPIDER-MAN
DAVE DEVRIES
CHROMIUM MASTERPIECES
Featuring art from the stars of 1995 Marvel Masterpieces:
• Nelson DeCastro
• Dave DeVries
• Dimitri Patelis
• Peter Scanlan
(Approximately 1:3 packs)
CLEARCHROME®
Using all-new ClearChrome® technology, these limited-edition cards feature characters taken directly from the Spider-Man animated show. (Approximately 1:7 packs)
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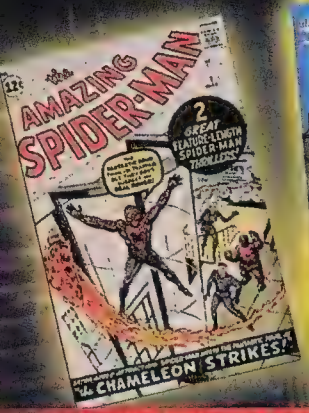

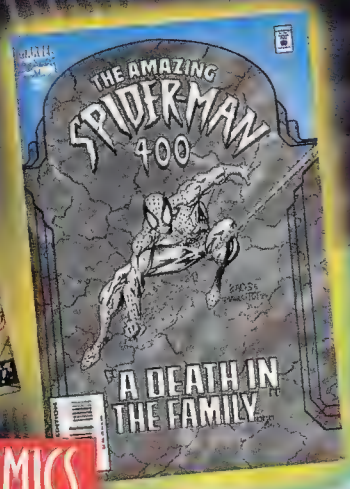

LEGENDS IN COMICS

With over 30 years of history, Spider-Man comics continue to be among the top-selling Marvel titles.

HOT TOY LINE

The web-head and his greatest enemies are a hot item for Toy Biz. From action figures to dress up sets, these toys are selling off the shelves.

NEW ANIMATED SHOW

On November 19th, the all-new Spider-Man animated series premiered featuring fabulous state-of-the-art animation and top-notch storytelling. Spidey's debut ranked #1 in November sweeps among viewers 6–17.

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Fleer Ultra Spider-Man is guaranteed to take its place in a long line of successful card products.

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FLEER ULTRA SPIDER-MAN® PREMIERE EDITION

CHECKLIST

1 SPIDER-MAN
2 ANNEX
3 ANSWER
4 BEETLE
5 BLACK CAT
6 BLOOD ROSE
7 BLOODY MARY
8 BOOMERANG
9 BURGLAR
10 CALYPSO
11 CARDIAC
12 CARNAGE
13 CARRION
14 CHAKRA
15 CHAMELEON
16 CHANCE
17 COLDHEART
18 DEMOGOBLIN
19 DOCTOR OCTOPUS
20 DOPPLEGANGER
21 ELECTRO
22 FEMALE SYMBIOTE
23 GREEN GOBLIN
24 GRIM HUNTER
25 HAMMERHEAD
26 HARDSHELL
27 HOBGOBLIN
28 HOMO ARACHNIS
29 J. JONAH JAMESON
30 JACKAL
31 JUDAS TRAVELLER
32 KAINE
33 KINGPIN
34 KRAVEN
35 LIZARD
36 MAN-WOLF
37 MARY JANE
38 MOLTEN MAN
39 MYSTERIO
40 NIGHTWATCH
41 NOCTURNE
42 OWL
43 PROWLER
44 PUMA
45 RHINO
46 SANDMAN
47 SANDSTORM
48 SCARLET SPIDER
49 SCORPION
50 SHOCKER
51 SHRIEK
52 SIN-EATER
53 SOLO
54 STEGRON
55 STRIKEBACK
56 STUNNER
57 SWARM
58 TARANTULA
59 TOMBSTONE
60 VENOM
61 VERMIN
62 VULTURE
63 WARRANT

LEGACY

64 KRAVEN
65 CHAMELEON
66 GRIM HUNTER
67 CARRION
68 SPIDER-CLONE
69 JACKAL
70 SPENCER SMYTHE
71 SPIDER-SLAYER
72 ALISTAIR SMYTHE
73 JACK O'LANTERN
74 HOBGOBLIN
75 DEMOGOBLIN
76 KINGPIN
77 SCHEMER
78 BLOOD ROSE
79 GREEN GOBLIN (NORMAN)
80 GREEN GOBLIN (HARRY)
81 FAKE PARENTS
82 ALIEN COSTUME
83 VENOM
84 CARNAGE

MILESTONES

85 ORIGIN OF SPIDER-MAN
86 DEATH OF GWEN STACY
87 ALIEN COSTUME SAGA
88 WEDDING
89 KRAVEN'S LAST HUNT
90 COSMIC SPIDER-MAN
91 MAXIMUM CARNAGE
92 PURSUIT
93 POWER & RESPONSIBILITY
94 THE EXILE RETURNS
95 WEB OF LIFE
96 WEB OF DEATH
97 SMOKE AND MIRRORS
98 DEATH OF A PARKER

THE VENOM FLOWS

99 CARNAGE
100 DAREDEVIL
101 DARKHAWK
102 DEMOGOBLIN
103 FEMALE SYMBIOTE
104 THE JURY
105 MACE
106 MORBIUS
107 SILVER SABLE
108 VENGEANCE

TEAM-UPS

109 BEAST
110 BLACK CAT
111 BLACK WIDOW
112 CAPTAIN AMERICA
113 DAREDEVIL
114 DEATHLOK
115 DR. STRANGE
116 FALCON
117 GAMBIT
118 GHOST RIDER
119 HAWKEYE
120 HUMAN TORCH
121 IRON MAN
122 MOON KNIGHT
123 NICK FURY
124 NOVA
125 PUNISHER
126 SCARLET WITCH
127 SILVER SABLE

UNLIKELY ALLIES

128 DR. OCTOPUS
129 GREEN GOBLIN
130 THE JURY
131 LIZARD
132 MAN-THING
133 PUMA
134 VENOM

CARNAGE USA

135 STATUE OF LIBERTY
136 LIBERTY BELL
137 LINCOLN MEMORIAL
138 GRACELAND
139 ALAMO
140 HOLLYWOOD
141 SAN FRANCISCO
142 MT. RUSHMORE
143 WRIGLEY FIELD
144 CONEY ISLAND

ARACHNO-PHOBIAS

145 CLAW-HIDE
146 DOPPLE SHOCK
147 KING CARNAGE
148 MYZARY
149 SCAVENGER

150 CHECKLIST

GOLDEN WEB CHROMIUM

GW1 BLACK CAT
GW2 CARNAGE
GW3 HOBGOBLIN
GW4 KRAVEN
GW5 LIZARD
GW6 SCORPION
GW7 SPIDER-MAN
GW8 VENOM
GW9 VULTURE

MASTERPIECES CHROMIUM

MP1 CARNAGE
MP2 CARNAGE
MP3 CARNAGE
MP4 SPIDER-MAN
MP5 SPIDER-MAN
MP6 SPIDER-MAN
MP7 VENOM
MP8 VENOM
MP9 VENOM

CLEARCHROME®

CC1 DR. OCTOPUS
CC2 GREEN GOBLIN
CC3 HOBGOBLIN
CC4 KRAVEN
CC5 LIZARD
CC6 RHINO
CC7 SCORPION
CC8 SHOCKER
CC9 SPIDER-MAN
CC10 VENOM

HOLOBLAST™

HB1 SPIDER-MAN vs. CARNAGE
HB2 SPIDER-MAN vs. DR. OCTOPUS
HB3 SPIDER-MAN vs. SCORPION
HB4 VENOM vs. IRON MAN
HB5 VENOM vs. JUGGERNAUT
HB6 VENOM vs. SCARLET SPIDER

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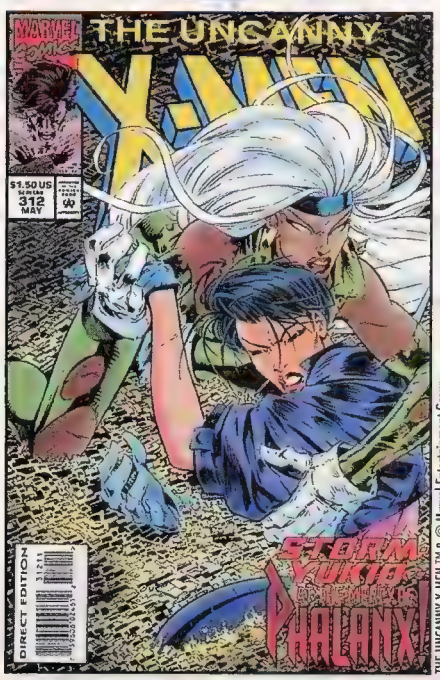
COMIC watch



THE UNCANNY X-MEN™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

The Uncanny X-Men #312

Writer: ***Scott Lobdell***
Artists: ***Joe Madureira, Dan Green, and Harry Candelario***
Publisher: ***Marvel Comics***
Release date: ***May 1994***

A recent X-book, you say? *Uncanny X-Men* #312, something that's definitely accessible to the average fan, is a watchable book? *Es la verdad*, and it's not because of the return of Storm's uninhibited, fun-lovin' pal Yukio. Nor is it due to the early, fearsome Phalanx appearance here. In actuality, artist Joe Madureira, who is quickly becoming a shining star in the comic industry, officially entered the well-populated X-world with this issue. His star will undoubtedly burn brighter as he's slated to redesign the mutants' costumes in an upcoming issue of *Uncanny X-Men*.

Madureira came to the X-family after drawing the acclaimed '93 *Deadpool* mini-series, and then began his stint as semi-regular *Uncanny* penciler with #312, depicting Storm and Yukio's "romp" through New York City where they went up against the merciless techno-organic entity. Just as he perfectly captured the motions and emotions of the duo—and a different-looking Gambit—as they fought the Phalanx and tried to protect innocent civilians, this artist has successfully captured the favor of the world's many mutant fans with his work on this *Uncanny* issue, #313, #316-#317, onward into its time-flip counterpublication, *The Astonishing X-Men*, as well as soon becoming the regular penciler on *Uncanny X-Men*.

Take our word for it that this should become a hot back X-issue, along with the knowledge that you'll be gettin' a cool story—what more encouragement do you need? ☆

good & cheap

by Mike Searle

MARVEL TEAM-UP™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Marvel Team-Up #65-#66

Writer: ***Chris Claremont***
Artists: ***John Byrne & Dave Hunt***
Current Total Value: ***$9.50***

I miss the grand ol' days of *Marvel Team-Up*, when Spidey joined forces with a different hero every issue, and every guest star meant a new adventure. Ah, nostalgia...(Wait, what am I thinking? Have I gone completely daft and forgotten about all those dang crossovers nowadays?!)

Well, a lot of those *Team-Ups* were just plain old fun, and I'd put *Marvel Team-Up* #65-#66 among the tops. You've got the origins of Captain Britain (of *Excalibur* fame, donning his best costume to date!) and the maniacal Arcade; plus, you're treated to the first appearance of Murderworld, a free-for-all of giant pinball machines, robotic cowboys, killer war planes, and more deadly gas than the tailend of your average chili-fest!

Fans of the X-Men will recognize Murderworld as a thorn in their side for a long time, but if you really want to see where it all began, these are the issues to pick up. Hey, and while you're at it, you'll have a blast reading through those wild '70s ads! ☆

PICKS
FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

HERE'S A LISTING OF THE HOTTEST BOOKS, AS SELECTED BY THE *WIZARD* STAFF, SHIPPING IN MAY!

X-Men: Prime #1

Writers: ***Scott Lobdell & Fabian Nicieza***
Artiss: ***Various***
Release Date: ***May***
Cover Price: ***$4.95***

MARVEL This special issue returns the X-Men from their four-month excursion into another reality—the timeflip reality created when Professor Xavier was prevented from forming his mutant team 20 years in the past. "The story picks up two weeks after the Age of Apocalypse ends," explains assistant editor Ben Raab. "It gives readers a chance to see what repercussions will linger from that story's events, and introduces new subplots for each ongoing title."

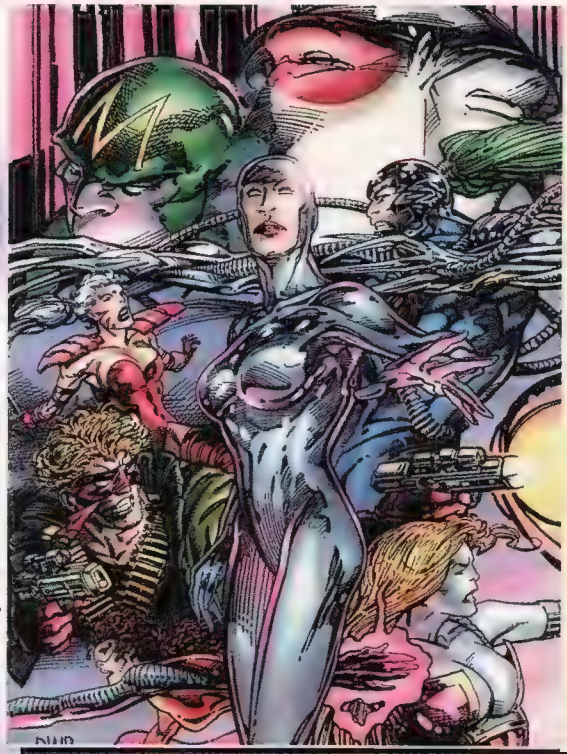
Some events, like Wolverine and Sabretooth's ultimate battle from the pre-timeflip *Wolverine* #90, will affect the new continuity immediately. Others will only begin to reveal their full impact. Also thrown into the mix are four mysterious characters, who make the transition from the other reality and promise to have a major effect on upcoming plotlines. "These characters will not only have an impact on the X-Men's future, but we will discover that they've had an impact on the past as well," Raab says enigmatically.

This issue makes a good jumping-on point for comics fans who somehow were unaware (as if that were possible) of the big brouhaha running through the X-books for the last few months. "It establishes the foundation and sets storylines in motion for all the books." To emphasize that, a variety of X-artists will handle separate subplots on various pages; included are Bryan Hitch, Gary Frank, Mike McKone, Jeff Matsuda, Ben Herrara, Terry Dodson, and Paul Pelletier. "That approach offers a sense of continuity with the individual books and helps reinforce the subplots that tie into the separate titles," Raab explains.

With that much talent under one cover, you just knew it would expand to 48 pages and feature a refractive chromium cover, didn't you? That combination is bound to garner plenty of attention for the relaunch of the X-Universe. —Craig Shutt

X-Men ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

WildStorm Rising Crossover



All characters shown ™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc. DBA WildStorm Productions

Writers: ***Lotsa folks***
Artists: ***Lots more***
Release Date: ***May***
Cover Price: ***$2.50 (Direct Market ed.'s)***
$1.95 (Newsstand ed.'s)

IMAGE Jim Lee wanted a cool way to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the founding of his studio, so he cooked up a tasty delicacy for fans: "WildStorm Rising," running through 11 books this month. The plot focuses on three keys to a Daemonite mothership, which has been lost for centuries. Two Daemonite Lords—Defile and Hightower—both have their nefarious minds set on grabbing the key, for whoever captures all three keys gains control of the ship and its untold power—and each Daemonite intends to manipulate a few heroes into helping gain that power!

The story's prologue appears in *Team 7—Objective: Hell* #1, the first part of a three-part mini-series written by Chuck Dixon. It takes off with *WildStorm Rising* #1, one of two bookends for the cross-over. Then it winds through (in order) *WildC.A.T.s* #20, *Union* #4, *Gen*^{13} #2, *Grifter* #1, *Deathblow* #16, *WetWorks* #8, *Backlash* #8, and *StormWatch* #22, and wraps up in *WildStorm Rising* #10, which is the tenth issue in the cross-over. Each direct market issue contains two trading cards, a unique one and one selected randomly from this month's WildStorm Gallery set.

James Robinson writes *WildStorm Rising* #1 and the next two chapters, *Gen*^{13}'s creative team handles their part, Steven Seagle co-writes the next three, and Ron Marz handles the final trio. —CS

Superman vs. Aliens #1 (of 3)

Writer: ***Dan Jurgens***
Artists: ***Dan Jurgens & Kevin Nowlan***
Release Date: ***May***
Cover Price: ***$4.95***

DARK HORSE & DC "I've always thought the idea of a domed city flying through space was cool," explains writer-penciler Dan Jurgens. That's where the central action takes place in this three-part monthly adventure. A Kryptonian-like space probe leads Kal-El to a domed city called Argo that separated from the dying planet. Now the city's in distress as its natural resources run dry. When Kal's spaceship lands, he meets a 15-year-old girl named Kara, who...

Wait a minute! Wasn't the original (pre-Crisis) Supergirl really Kara of Argo City? "It's such an obvious take-off on that myth that I decided to play with it," Jurgens agrees. Superman also finds that not only are things more dire than the probe revealed, but the city is overrun with Aliens—who are chomping at the bit to tackle a fresh Kryptonian weakened by a lack of solar power.

"I'm really proud of this project," Jurgens says. "[Inker] Kevin Nowlan, [colorist] Greg Wright, and I have created an atmosphere that's entirely different from the monthly books. The fun part for me has been drawing these slimy, dark, ugly, grotesque monsters who contrast with Superman."

Will Kara of Argo turn up again? "In team-ups like this, I don't think you should do inconsequential stories," Jurgens says cagily. "This story definitely takes place in continuity." —CS

Superman ™ & © DC Comics. Aliens ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox.

The Sandman #69

Sandman™ & © DC Comics

Writer: ***Neil Gaiman***
Artist: ***Marc Hempel***
Release Date: ***May***
Cover Price: ***$2.50***

VERTIGO/DC Let's face it, if you haven't picked up *The Sandman* before, you probably aren't going to start here. But if you've ever peeked in on the world of the Dreaming, you might want to check out how Neil Gaiman bids it adieu.

"This is where it all ends," states Karen Berger, executive editor for DC's Vertigo line. "This is the end of something that Neil has been building to for a long time. This has been a landmark series for years, and this is its final moments." In this final chapter of "The Kindly Ones," a number of ongoing stories wrap up in preparation for (brace yourself) the end of the title in six months.

The issue will be followed by a three-part story illustrated by Michael Zulli, called "The Wake." That will lead to three single-issue stories, finishing with "The Tempest," double-sized #75 by Charles Vess. Then the curtain rings down.

But fear not. A second Death mini-series begins the next month by Gaiman and Chris Bachalo, called *Death: The Time of Your Life*. That will be followed shortly by *The Dreaming*, an ongoing monthly series featuring the Sandman's supporting cast (with Gaiman acting as creative consultant). "The series is a spin-off, not a continuation," Berger stresses. "But the atmosphere of *The Sandman* will live on." —CS

UltraForce #8

Writers: ***Hank Kanalz & Marv Wolfman***
Artists: ***George Pérez & Keith Aiken***
Release Date: ***May***
Cover Price: ***$2.50***

MALIBU Remember back in *Avengers* #375, more than a year ago, when the Black Knight stepped into that mysterious green breach with Sersi, and seemingly disappeared from the face of the Earth? Well, all you Marvel fans can stop looking under your sofa cushions now. It turns out he landed in the middle of Malibu's Ultraverse, and his timing couldn't have been worse.

"The Black Knight steps out of the green breach right into the middle of an UltraForce adventure," explains writer Hank Kanalz. "Since he's got no way to return to the Marvel Universe, he sees UltraForce as his best bet for finding a way back. So he joins them." His presence sets the stage for the major Avengers-UltraForce crossover that's coming our way in August.

As if that wasn't enough to qualify this book to be picked from the Hat, the Ultraverse's new ultra-bad girl Siren worms her way into the group, too. Fresh from her debut in *Eliminator* #1, which is also out this month, Siren joins the team "under circumstances that are not 100-percent true," Kanalz reveals. "She deceives some of them into letting her join." The team members won't know the real deal, but readers will, so they can watch the teammates' varying reactions to having this babelicious vixen in their midst. —CS

Black Knight™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group, ULTRAFORCE™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment.

MORE PICKS

The following pages list the peachiest titles shipping in May, as selected and written by the *Wizard* staff. Books marked with a check ✓ sign are comics that should not be overlooked on the often-stuffed comic shelf.

AQUAMAN #10

DC COMICS Now that their king's dead, things ain't lookin' too good for those fish people down in Atlantis. But fear not, piscitorians, for Aquaman's son, Koryak, can bring everyone together in this time of crisis. While that's going on, the big fish guy himself goes fist-to-fist with the guest-starring Green Lantern over some environmental issue. Hmm, let's see, a fight between a guy who has a ring that can do just about anything he thinks of and a guy who can talk to salmon and has one hand. Wonder if there'll be an issue #11. By Peter David, Jim Calafiore, and Howard Shum. **$1.75**

BADROCK #3

IMAGE Aunt Petunia's other favorite nephew confronts the Overlord and the Mafioso in order to save his dad's life. What a good bubbala. By Rob Liefeld and Eric Stephenson. And ifs ya's wants some more Badrock, check out *Violator/Badrock* #1 (of 4), where the sick clown-faced freak takes on our favorite Youngblood schmoe. By Alan Moore, Brian Denham, and Jonathan Sibal. **$1.75—*BADROCK*; $2.50—*VIOLATOR/BADROCK***

BATMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS In *Batman* #520, it seems ol' Jim Gordon's in worse trouble than usual, now that he's getting reprimanded by his wife, Sarah, who just happens to be the new police commissioner of Gotham! Then skulk over to *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #40, where Anarky turns to Batman for help, after he learns that one o' them prophet-of-doom-types is bent on following some apocalyptic prophecy in Gotham. And for you lunar lovers, pick up *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #73, for "Werewolf," Part 3 (of 3). While Batman's sniffing around for the killer in the wrong places, the true werewolf continues his reign of blood! And to satiate your Bat-thirst, *Detective Comics* #687 sees the Caped Crusader hobnobbing it with the rich an' famous as he tries to stop some surly pirates from raiding a bunch of yachts and stuff. **$1.95 EACH**

ETERNAL WARRIOR #40

GLORY #3

© Voyager
© Rob Liefeld Inc.

CURSE OF RUNE #1

MALIBU In the first issue of his new series, Rune goes around cursing everyone in the comic industry. No one is safe from the energy vampire's wrath as he spews expletive after expletive at Marvel, DC, Image, and yes, even Malibu. Plus, Rune's now got Adam Warlock's Soul Gem and the copy of *Penthouse* with Madonna in it, and just wait until ya see what he does with 'em. By Chris Ulm and Kyle Hotz. **$2.50**

CYBERFORCE #14

IMAGE Aaaaahhh!!! Cyberforce is STILL trying to deal with the truth behind their cybernetic implants as they battle Cyberdata's newest weapon, T.I.M.M.I.E.??? Will these guys ever get past this? Seems like they're stuck in one of those mobius strips! By Eric and Marc Silvestri, and Anthony Winn. **$2.25**

ETERNAL WARRIOR #39-#40

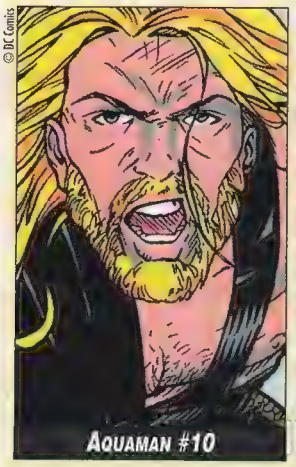
ACCLAIM The Warrior practically coughs up a lung in this storyline when he goes up against a bunch of body thieves. You know, those sickos who go around stealin' people just to get their internal organs! *Wizard* educational note of the day: your skin is the largest organ in your body! By John Ostrander, Jackson Guice, and Randy Elliott. **$2.50**

FLASH #103

DC COMICS Women! Ya think ya know 'em, and then from out of nowhere comes some horrible, supernatural force from a secret part of their past! Well, that's just what Wally's gotta deal with this issue when he tries to find his main squeeze, Linda Park. By Mark Waid, Michael Jan Friedman, Roger Robinson, and Jose Marzan Jr. **$1.75**

✓ GENERATION X #5

MARVEL The Kids are back! Though they never really left, did they? They were just sort of...er...different, yeah, that's it. Anyways, this month you'll meet two new mutants (get it?). As to whether they're friends or foes, well, you'll just have to read the issue yourself! By Scott Lobdell, Chris Bachalo, and Mark Buckingham. Bachalo says of the issue, "We're going to explore a little bit more of the characters now that we're back in the real world. We intro-


AQUAMAN #10

CYBERFORCE #14

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MORE PICKS

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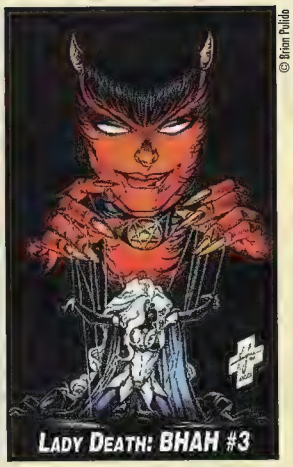

© Brian Pulido

duce a couple of characters that I believe were in *X-Force* before (subtle hint). Another thing we wanted to do was get away from the Massachusetts Academy for an issue or two. So we brought a small portion of the group to New York. They get to taste a little bit of New York's style of living. And we have a little cameo—a very brief cameo—by a very famous superhero who's been around for a real long time and resides in New York City." **$1.95**

✓ GHOST #2

DARK HORSE "Arcadia Nocturne," Part 2 (of 3). Ghost searches for more clues to her past life by bringing in King Tiger, who gives her some answers that she probably doesn't want to hear. Yep, you guessed it. She was Bea Arthur in a former life. By Eric Luke, Adam Hughes, and Mark Farmer. Luke says, "Generally, I'm having Ghost go up against some of the darker things in society that women have to face. I'm going to have Ghost get into darker and darker things as the series goes on—as she gets closer to the source of the mystery and the rage. What I'm trying to do is sort of reveal things like peeling away the layers of an onion, where each layer reveals that what you thought was true before, is not true." Neat. **$2.50**

GLORY #3

IMAGE "Tell me who/WHO!/Who wrote the book of demonic love spells?" Well, regardless of who wrote it, it's back and it's causing trouble for our leadin' lady, Glory. Plus, check out Rumble and Vandal (who?), who both make an appearance right here. By Jo Duffy and Mike Deodato Jr. **$2.50**

GREEN LANTERN #64

DC COMICS "Parallax View: The Resurrection of Hal Jordan," Part 2 (of 2). D'oh! Looks like our buddy Kyle didn't quite hold up his own against Hal. And now there's no one to stop Parallax from going right for Ganthet! Well, no one, that is, unless ya count Superman, Aquaman, Hawkman, Green Arrow, the Flash, and more! The Battle Royale Supremo is brought to ya by Ron Marz, Darryl Banks, and Romeo Tanghal. (Go get 'em, Hal.) **$1.75**

GRENDEL TALES: DEVIL'S CHOICES #3 (OF 4)

DARK HORSE Goran and Marica spend an enchanted evening together, yet when they wake up in the mornin', it seems that his clan killed hers. So, what's their next course of action, kiddies? Bloodshed? That's right, Marica gets a bit stricken with grief and goes straight for Goran's jugular! Great stuff from Darko Macan and Edvin Biukovic. You mature types will really enjoy this one. **$2.95**

✓ THE INCREDIBLE HULK #431

MARVEL If you thought the sewers in New York City were abominable before, just wait till ya see what's down there now! There's like, giant alligators, Sludge, that Sewer Urchin guy from the Tick, Morlocks, them C.H.U.D. guys, and...the Abomination. Plenty o' rockem-sockem action from Peter David, Liam Sharp, and Robin Riggs. David says of the issue, "That's the first of a two-parter that sends the Hulk after the Abomination. He finds himself in a position where he's trying to decide whether he should be battling the Abomination or serving as an ally to him. But if he does so—and puts it all on the line for the Abomination—he risks not only blowing his cover, but any chance he has at any sort of normal life that he promised Betty." **$1.95**

KNIGHTHAWK #1-#2 (OF 6)

ACCLAIM This new mini-series tells the story of Knighthawk, the Protector—a guy with big red wings and some pretty sharp claws. Oh yeah, there's also this nasty li'l bad guy called Nemo, formally of Slumberland. By Neal Adams, Peter Stone, Ernesto Infante, and Rudy Nebres. **$2.50 EACH**

LADY DEATH: BETWEEN HEAVEN & HELL #3 (OF 4)

CHAOS! COMICS It's a ringside seat in Hell as Lady Death and Purgatori launch one last attack in the River Styx! But the truth about that weasel Purgatori is discovered when she attempts to get Lucifer's essence straight from Lady Death herself. By Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes, and Jason Jensen. **$2.75**

THE LONG HOT SUMMER #1 (OF 3)

MILESTONE/DC Turn the sprinklers on and get out the lemonade, 'cause winter's over and here comes summer! Milestone's summer-long crossover begins right here, with a new governor in Dakota as well as the building of a Utopia theme park which

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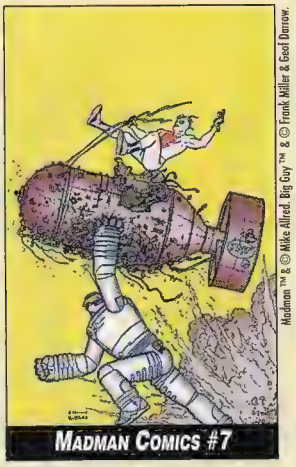

Madman™ & © Mike Allred. Big Guy™ & © Frank Miller & Geof Darrow.

BEFORE

AFTER

EVOLVE OR DIE

Price guide for *Magic*, *Star Trek*, *Illuminati*, *Spellfire*, and more.
Tips on building killer decks. Creator interviews.
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WIZARD PRESENTS

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Dragon art courtesy of TSR

MORE PICKS

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THE POWER OF SHAZAM! #5

© Chris Claremont
SOVEREIGN SEVEN #1

forces a lot of people out of their homes and into the new Lake James Vista projects. Follow the excitement in all the Milestone books—*Hardware* #29, *Icon* #27, *Xombi* #14, *Blood Syndicate* #28, *Shadow Cabinet* #14, *Kobalt* #14, and *Static* #25. By D.G. Chichester, Denys Cowan, and Prentis Rollins. **$2.95**

✓ MADMAN COMICS #7

DARK HORSE The wackiest team-up this side of Hulk Hogan and Christopher Lloyd continues, as Madman and the Big Guy try to get Dr. Boiffard and his freakin' huge head into safety. What makes this crossover even cooler than it possibly could be is that Frank Miller's writing the dialogue for the Big Guy, and Geof Darrow's splashin' the Big Guy all over the front and back covers of this baby! By Mike Allred and Frank Miller. Allred says, "Just this last weekend, I saw the complete two issues of the Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot, and I'm telling you, the first issue is incredible, but the second issue is easily the most amazing comic book I've ever seen in my life. That's not hype. You can imagine how thrilled I am that the Big Guy's making his official debut in my comic book." **$2.95**

✓ THE POWER OF SHAZAM! #5

DC COMICS First the talkin' Mr. Tawny's back, and now Mary Marvel! Whoo-hoo! Could things possibly get any better? Well, they certainly won't for Black Adam, the guy who offed Mary's parents, 'cause now she's back for revenge! Plenty of lightning bolts and flying people courtesy of Jerry Ordway, Peter Krause, and Mike Manley. According to Ordway, "The way I was looking at that issue was kind of a Mary-fights-alone kind of thing, because Captain Marvel is actually out of Fawcett City and she just goes off on her first solo adventure. There's a lot of elements from the old continuity, and old characters keep popping up issue by issue. I'm actually trying to find out what characters DC has legal claim to from the old Fawcett days, because once my brain starts working on these things, I can't let them go." Can't wait for that li'l worm guy to show up. **$1.75**

RIPCLAW #3

IMAGE Ripclaw and his fellow Cyberforce pals let bygones be bygones, as they team up with Cyberdata's S.H.O.C.s in order to stop a multitude of demons from taking over the Earth. Again. By Eric Silvestri, Brandon Peterson, and Al Vey. **$2.50**

ROBIN #18

DC COMICS Have you seen Robin in the *Batman Forever* movie preview yet? He looks awesome! Though he doesn't look too shabby here, either, in this consistently great book. Anyway, in this issue, Robin's gotta hunt down some freak who's blowing things up all over Gotham City. By Chuck Dixon and Mike Parobeck. **$1.95**

SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM #48-#49

ACCLAIM The "Brave New World" storyline continues with a special all-out "S" issue. Sentry learns the identity of Solar, Silver Sky finds out how incredibly strong Solar actually is, and Sin Buster sets his sights on snuffin' Solar, who sells seashells by the seashore. By Dan Jurgens and Dick Giordano. **$2.50 EACH**

SOVEREIGN SEVEN #1

DC COMICS After a freak crop-dusting accident, Snow White's seven li'l dwarfish friends gain superpowers and explode! Also, Cascade, Reflex, Network, Rampart, Indigo, Cruiser, and Finale are superpowered refugees that suddenly find themselves smack-dab in the middle of the DC Universe, where they end up battling the Female Furies of Apokolips and even ol' Purple Puss himself! By Chris Claremont and Dwayne Turner. **$1.95**

SPAWN #32

IMAGE This month, Spawny-guy changes his underwear! Oh boy! It's about friggin' time, too! And while he's at it, ol' Scarface changes his costume as well! Following his vicious battle with the Redeemer, Spawn perms his hair and gets a permanent change in his ensemble that'll make him bigger and badder and tougher than ever before! By Todd McFarlane and Greg Capullo. **$1.95**

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS

MARVEL As if we weren't sick of murder trials already, *Web of Spider-Man* #126 starts "The Trial of Peter Parker," in which Peter goes looking for the only guy who can clear him of murder—Kaine. *Amazing Spider-Man* #403 continues "The Trial," with Ben Reilly stepping in for Peter, so that Spider-Man can head

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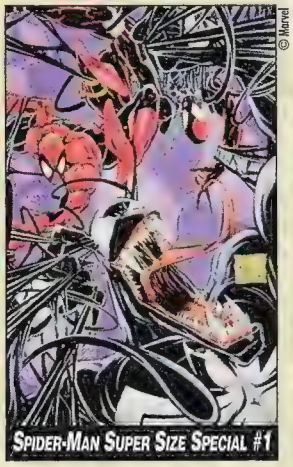
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #226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SPIDER-MAN SUPER SIZE SPECIAL #1

RARE BREED™
A SORDID COLLECTION OF BAD GUYS, OUTLAWS IF YOU WILL, PUT TOGETHER BY THE LEADERS OF THE FREE WORLD TO COMBAT TERRORISM WORLD-WIDE. NOW THEY HAVE TO OPERATE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LAW
Darkmoon Productions
YEAH RIGHT!
ZOE
CESAR
COMING IN JULY FROM DARK MOON PRODUCTIONS
BAD BOYS, BAD BOYS, WHAT YA GONNA DO!

MORE PICKS

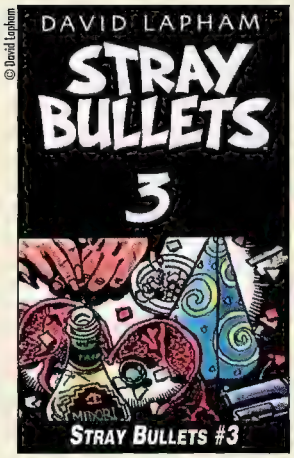
out to find the true murderer. Unfortunately, Spidey ends up bumpin' heads with that wacky guy Carnage. For Part 3 of "The Trial," check out *Spider-Man* #60. This issue, you'll finally find out the absolute gosh-darn-it truth about Kaine's origin! (He's either another freakin' Spidey Clone or Flash Thompson!) And for the conclusion to "The Trial of Peter Parker," swing by *Spectacular Spider-Man* #226. Not only will the *real* Peter Parker finally be revealed here, but we learn what Judge Ito wears, if anything, under that robe! And if you want even more Spidey fun in your life, pick up the *Spider-Man Super Size Special* #1. Venom's wounded symbiote costume sends out a distress signal which brings a whole fleet of alien symbiotes down for revenge! (What?) **$1.50—*WEB OF SPIDER-MAN, AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN*; $1.95—*SPIDER-MAN*; $3.95—*SUPER SIZE SPECIAL***

Star Wars Books

DARK HORSE Over in *Star Wars: Droids* #2, R2D2 and C-3PO are stranded on Nar Shaddaa, probably the most dangerous place in the universe. But that's nothing, cause things get real bad when Jace Forno worms her way into a top security position and gets an itch to do away with some meddling droids! Then force yourself (Hah! Get it?) to read *Star Wars: Dark Empire II* #6 (of 6). Han, Leia, and their twins hide themselves on New Alderaan, but it seems the Emperor and an AT-AT battalion are hot on their trail! And for more space-faring fun, read *Star Wars: River of Chaos* #1 (of 4). By Louise Simonson, June Brigman, and Roy Richardson. A few months following the Death Star's destruction (Wahoo! Go, Rebels!), the Emperor sends a spy to M'Haeli to uncover Rebel activity. But what he doesn't realize is that a certain Princess (wonder which one) is hangin' around on M'Haeli. **$2.50—*DROIDS, RIVER OF CHAOS*; $2.95—*DARK EMPIRE II***

✓ Stray Bullets #3

EL CAPITÁN Forget big-muscled superheroes and all-out war. If you're looking for some pure fun, check out this issue where Led and Sonny, a pair of young punks who barely get by with their rent each month, run across a big load of cash. Do they invest it like good little children should? Heck, no, they PARTY!! But alas,



© David Lapham

Stray Bullets #3

© Harris

Vengeance of Vampirella #14

the fun stops when Led actually...*shudder*...falls in love! By David Lapham, who says, "The first two issues were pretty grim and bloody. So, this issue sort of lightens things up a little bit and brings out the sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. You also finally start to see some of the larger picture and some of the characters and how they interweave with each other." **$2.95**

Superboy #17

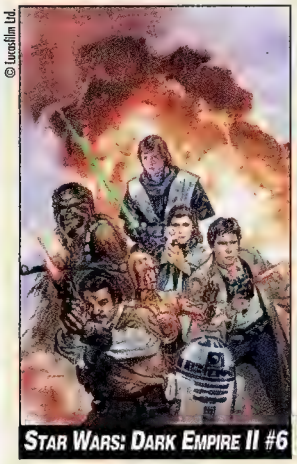
DC COMICS The littlest big guy around heads off to Vegas, gambles away all his money, witnesses a mob killing, then hides out in a convent and teaches all the other nuns to rock and boogie. Oh, wait, wrong movie. This ish sees the kid search for Roxy Leech, but it seems Ms. Leech just doesn't wanna be found. By Karl Kesel, Tom Grummett, and Doug Hazlewood. **$1.95**

Superman Books

DC COMICS "The Death of Clark Kent" concludes this month in *Action Comics* #711. Supes finally takes care of the villain behind Clark Kent's utter destruction, but it may prove to be a hollow victory, unless he can save Jimmy, Lois, and his folks in time! After you've caught your breath from that one, go pick up *Superman: The Man of Steel* #46. Shadowdragon attempts to help Supes get back to Metropolis, but considering everything that's happened lately, that just may not be too good an idea. Keep an eye out for the Big "S" in *Superman* #102, although you won't find him in Metropolis. What you will find is a certain Big Red Cheese guest-starring in this issue, as well as the kidnapping of a deteriorating Lex Luthor from S.T.A.R. Labs. (Five bucks says a second Lex Luthor clone, the Scarlet Luthor, did it!) And rounding out this month's Superman smorgasbord is *Adventures of Superman* #525. The Man of Steel bumps into someone he never thought he'd see again, who convinces him that Superman is still needed by the rest of the world. **$1.95 EACH**

Vengeance of Vampirella #14

HARRIS Take the "Mystery Walk" with Vampi! This issue starts a new six-part storyline in the heroine's life, as she begins to uncover the truth behind her mysterious origin. By Tom Sniegoski, Kevin Sharpe, and Caesar. **$2.95**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Star Wars: Dark Empire II #6

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Star Wars: Droids #2

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MORE PICKS

The Visitor #8-#9

ACCLAIM What is this, "Heroes Unmasked Month"? It seems there's like a dozen characters revealing their identities. So join the fun—go put on a mask and then take it off in front of your friends! Anyways, the Harbinger reveals his identity (ten bucks says he used to be the singer for The Police) following his battle with the Visitor. Also, some pyro-freak named Flamingo (who's also mighty pur-ty) shows up just in time to pay tribute to the Visitor. By Kevin VanHook and John Ross. **$2.50 EACH**

Weapon Zero #T-Minus-4

IMAGE So, you believe everything you see on TV or read in the papers? Well, you've been duped! Nothing is real (except for what you read in *Wizard*, of course). Those astronauts who landed on the moon almost 30 years ago saw some pretty scary things that they never told us about. This mini-series tackles a whole wad o' conspiracies that tie into the Cyberforce universe. By Walter Simonson, Joe Benitez, and Batt. **$2.50**

Wonder Woman #100

DC COMICS Hey, Happy Birthday, Wondie! The Amazon Princess celebrates her centennial in typical bloody fashion. The White Magician, hopped up on a ludicrous amount of power, thanks to some demon (There's those pesky demons again!), takes out Artemis (the new WW), leaving her for dead. And then there's poor Diana, who's easily no match for the Magician...or is she? This issue decides once and for all who should be the one true Wonder Woman! By William Messner-Loebs and Mike Deodato Jr. **$3.95—DELUXE EDITION; $2.95—REGULAR EDITION**

✓ X #15

DARK HORSE It's the high-falootin' conclusion to "The War for Arcadia." Get yer scorecard ready, 'cause it's an all-out major battle between Carmine and the mob, Diana Goretti and her followers, the Judgment Knights, the cops, the citizens of Arcadia, and of course, a certain guy called X. By Steven Grant and Javier Saltares. Grant says of this ish, "It all comes down. You find out what X has been after all this time, because he gets it. Anything that you've ever wondered about X's motives is revealed in this issue. And he's got amazingly simple motives that no one has yet guessed. It's the final confrontation between basically him and everybody." Should be cool. **$2.50**

© Dark Horse
X #15

© Voyager
X-O Manowar #49

X-Files #5

TOPPS "Firebird," Part 2 (of 3). That wacky Firebird is loose in New Mexico, using its power to stave off any and every attack from the soldiers hunting it down to discover the secret to its powers. Unfortunately, Scully, Mulder, and some shaman named Khobka (How the hell do you pronounce that?) are the only ones who know the secret of Firebird, yet they're on the run themselves from the pesky inner government. By Stefan Petrucha and Charles Adlard. **$2.50**

X-Men Books

MARVEL For all you continuity nuts out there, the X-freaks are back in their own flipped-out universe. In *Uncanny X-Men* #322 Iceman and Rogue run from a terrible secret of Gambit's. "But, *mon petit*, it's true. None of ze past few months has ever happened! *C'est la vie.*" Over in *X-Men* #42, things really heat up when some wacky villain from the timeflip universe jumps aboard Avalon, which can only mean some big problems are in store for Magneto and Colossus. **$1.95 EACH**

✓ X-O Manowar #48-#49

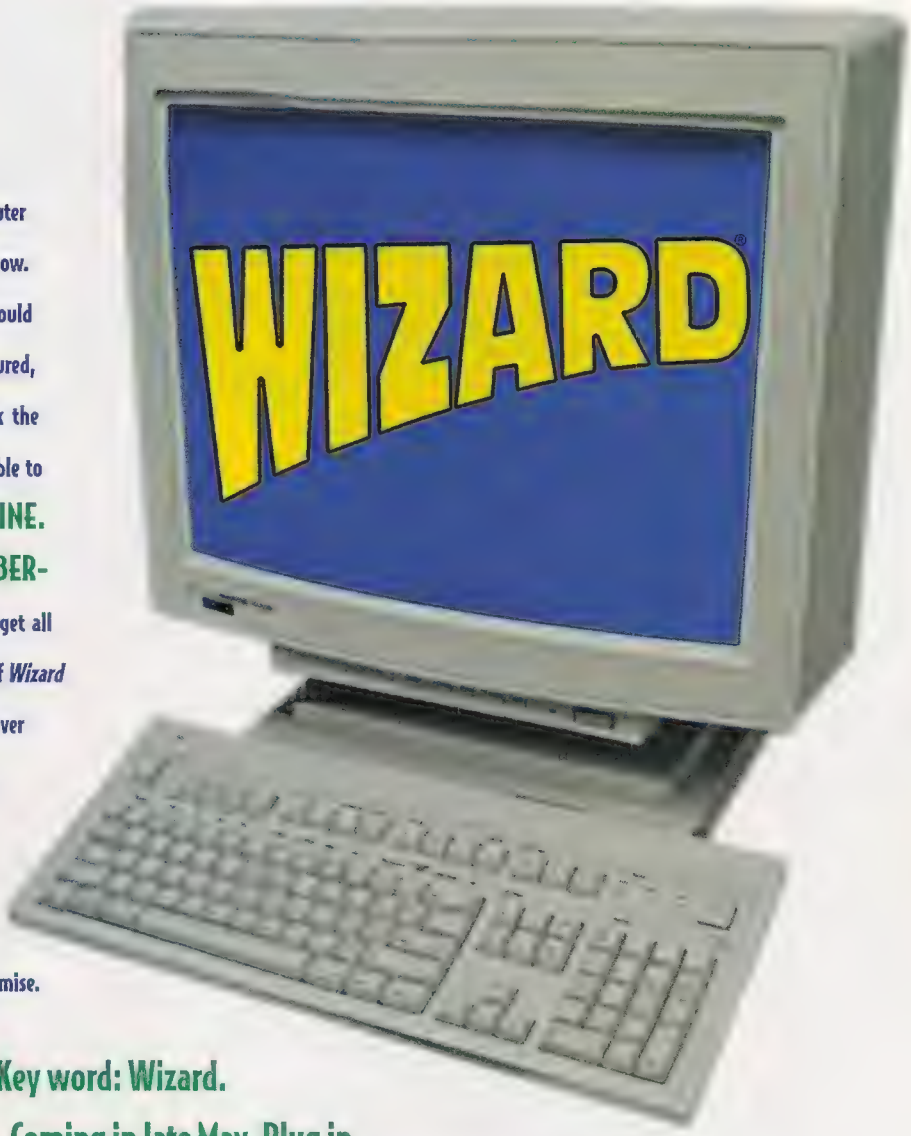
ACCLAIM Turok tries to bring Aric out of the dumps, but only succeeds in making things worse. Also, Paul's spirit begins to show up once again within the X-O armor, and Aric no longer has any control over the Good Skin! ("Armor...filling with...urine. Please, Good Skin...open...faceplate.") Things just don't look good for our resident barbarian. By Ron Marz, Bart Sears, Andy Smith, and Ray Kryssing. Marz says, "Issue #48 serves as an epilogue to the four-part story when Bart, Andy, and I came on the book [#44-#47], and it's a very meditative and reflective kind of issue. It's an unusual issue, in that there's really very little action, as X-O deals with the tragedies that befell him in the previous issues. Issue #49 kind of starts the next chapter of X-O's life. And a character from X-O's past will actually come to the forefront and take over the armor from him." **$2.50 EACH**

© Voyager
The Visitor #8

© Top Cow
Weapon Zero #T-Minus-4

Wizard Online

THE COMIC BOOK UNIVERSE IS ABOUT TO ENTER CYBERSPACE



Yeah, we've been following this computer **ONLINE STUFF** for quite a while now. You know—trying to figure out if we should put *WIZARD* online or not. So we figured, **"WHAT THE HELL?"** and took the plunge. Starting this May, you'll be able to read *Wizard* via **AMERICA ONLINE.** That's right, we're officially in **CYBER-SPACE** (scary thought, eh?). You'll get all that **GROOVY** stuff you expect out of *Wizard* plus a whole bunch of stuff you've never seen before. What exactly? Beats the hell out of us, but **TRUST US**—it will **BLOW DOORS** off anything else you've ever seen in cyberspace. Promise.

Wizard World. Key word: Wizard.

Coming in late May. Plug in.

Stay tuned for ordering information.

AMERICA Online

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TEKNO·COMIX
LEONARD NIMOY'S PRIMORTALS
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NEIL GAIMAN'S TEKNOPHAGE
MICKEY SPILLANE'S MIKE DANGER
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JOHN JAKES' MULLKON EMPIRE
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When the scales of justice are upset by evil, a force called LADY JUSTICE possesses the minds and bodies of women, using them as instruments to punish the guilty in NEIL GAIMAN'S LADY JUSTICE™.
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NON-CODE APPROVED
Artwork by Dan Brereton
Artwork by John Watkiss
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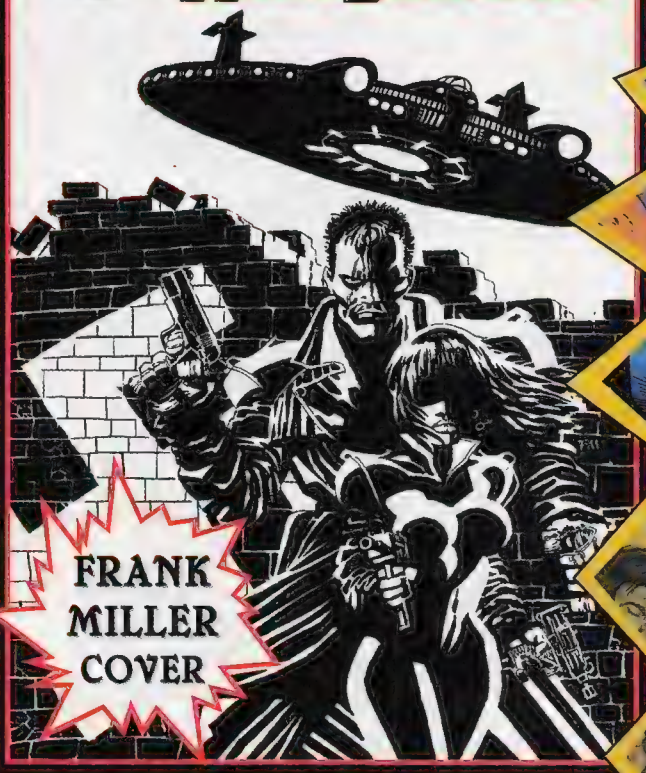
From the critically-acclaimed author of North and South™, Heaven and Hell™, and Love and War™, comes JOHN JAKES' MULLKON EMPIRE™, the space-age family saga of the mighty Mullkon Industries. Heaven help anyone, family or otherwise, who gets in the way of profit, or dares sully the Mullkon name!
PREMIERING IN MAY!
NEIL GAIMAN'S TEKNOPHAGE
Join the 9-foot super-saurian CEO as he swallows his victims whole and makes steam from their souls, and roams across his grim homeworld of Khaligoul searching for the tastiest of prey in NEIL GAIMAN'S TEKNOPHAGE™
NON-CODE APPROVED
Artwork by Bryan Talbot & Angus McKie

MICKEY SPILLANE'S

MIKE DANGER



ISSUE #1 PREMIERING IN MAY

Welcome to the pristine, crime-free world of New New York, or New-2 as it is known in the year 2052. New-2 is a society that late 20th century Singapore would have envied; certain personal freedoms have been traded for the sake of conformity.

Enter Mike Danger, the legendary private eye from the 1950s. Forced into a hibernation chamber, declared missing and assumed dead, Danger has been revived after a 100-year slumber. Danger's 20th century individualism is initially embraced with nostalgia, but Danger is not the sentimental type, and is about to give the powers-that-be a lesson in 20th century crime fighting!

MICKEY SPILLANE'S MIKE DANGER™ Issue #1 will feature cover art by industry icon **FRANK MILLER!**

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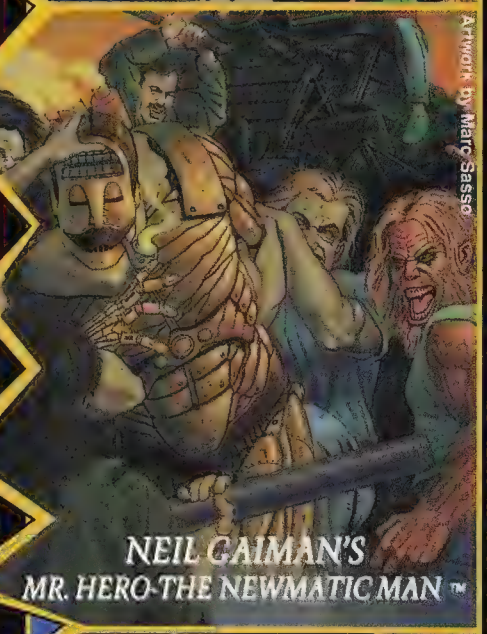

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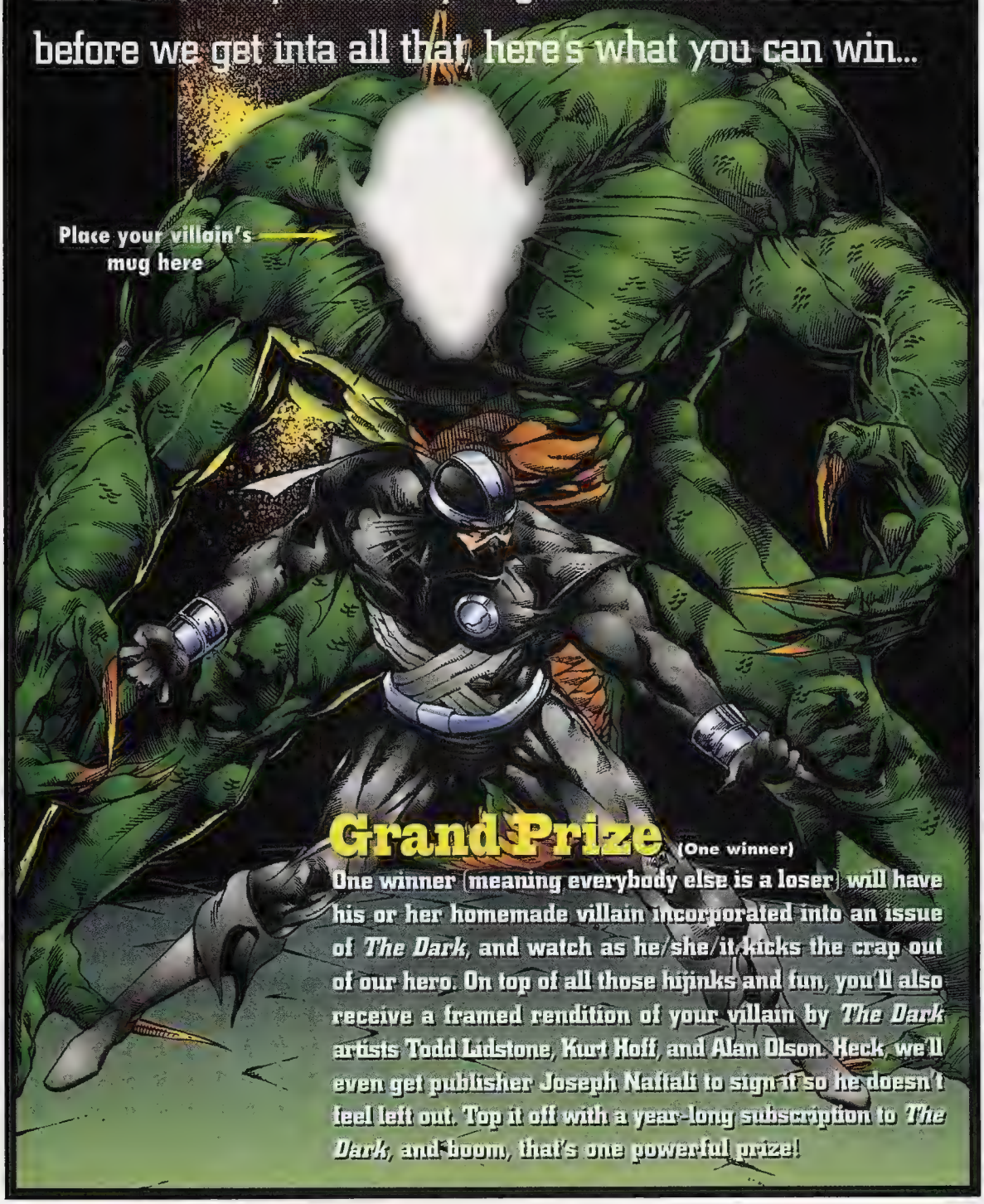
Destroy The Dark!

Well, that's what supervillains do—destroy everything in sight. And it's your job to create the malevolent villain that will try to destroy August House's The Dark. But before we get inta all that, here's what you can win...



Grand Prize (One winner)

One winner (meaning everybody else is a loser) will have his or her homemade villain incorporated into an issue of *The Dark*, and watch as he/she/it kicks the crap out of our hero. On top of all those hijinks and fun, you'll also receive a framed rendition of your villain by *The Dark* artists Todd Lidstone, Kurt Hoff, and Alan Olson. Heck, we'll even get publisher Joseph Naftali to sign it so he doesn't feel left out. Top it off with a year-long subscription to *The Dark*, and boom, that's one powerful prize!

So what's this about creating a supervillain? See, what you've gotta do—and what we know you *can* do—is create a cool new villain to give The Dark a hard time. So, basing your vile creation on the info below, put together the most kick-ass villain imaginable. Anyway, here's the background info:

The villain should not be from The Dark's past, but from an alternate dimension. Dr. James Kwahu, a scientist working for Miss Runo (a.k.a. Futura), opens up a dimensional door in *The Dark* #6, shipping in July. When Dr. Kwahu opens the portal, a spirit named Nadsehym, who comes from the other dimension, enters his body, changing him into a being of great power, able to wield formidable magical energies. Demons from this other universe also come poring through, trying to hunt down and destroy both The Dark and the now-altered Dr. Kwahu. The villain you create must come from this dimension, and he's seeking the life spirit that joined with Dr. Kwahu. He is perhaps an old enemy of the Dark, or the leader of the extradimensional demons.

So that's the scoop about the villain we want you to create! Along with your art, which should be on a sheet of 8″ x 11 1/4″ unlined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium—oils, crayon, line art, BBQ sauce, etc.—except for neon inks (which won't print), we suggest that you enclose a brief, 50-words-or-less description of your villain. This'll truly help us decide if your villain cuts the mustard!

WIZARD®

And once all that's outta the way, fill out the official Dark coupon below, adhere it somehow to the back of your bad guy art, and mail the whole thing off to:

The Dark Contest
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

This contest expires July 31, 1995, so stop playing Magic or whatever for two seconds and get to work!

LEGAL TEXT, NOW WITH RIBOFLAVIN

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, August House, their immediate families, and whoever thought up those phone commercials where that old guy's on the phone, and his wife is in the background yelling, "Who's Margie?" and "I'm sick of the circles!" Those commercials totally suck and are annoying as hell. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card, and attach the form or card to the back of your art entry. To help the judges make their decision, please enclose a description, of 50 words or less, of your villain with your entry. Mail each entry to The Dark Contest, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. And the commercial with the guy from *My Favorite Martian* asking about calling people on Mars? Somebody gets paid for that idea? **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 31, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Wizard Press will select the winner based on the creativity, originality, and quality of the submitted artwork, and will also focus upon the creativity and originality of any character description the entrant provides. The judging will be conducted on August 1, 1995 by Wizard Press.

For the winner's name, available after August 18, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to The Dark Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard* and *The Dark*!

All The Dark characters and August House logo ™ & © Joseph Naftali

ENTRIES DUE BY JULY 31, 1995!

THE DARK CONTEST

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE DATE OF BIRTH

TOP TEN COMICS

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are this month's hottest back issues.**

1. X-MEN: ALPHA #1

WRITERS: Scott Lobdell and Mark Waid ARTISTS: Roger Cruz and Tim Townsend

Hel-lo! Jumping five spots from the last Top Ten (that'd be *Wizard* #44; #45's Top Ten was wacky), Marvel's premier (and if you ask us, just gosh-darned underused) superteam gives the Gen[13] kids a flying headscissors to take 'em outta the top spot. So what makes this book hotter than Pam Anderson in a no-piece swimsuit? Three things. One: the word X-Men is on the cover. Two: it has a #1 on the cover. Three: it's pretty friggin' good. For those of you who might doubt all this and take the hands-off approach, thinking it to be nothing more than a big, stupid *What If?*, just pick up *Alpha* and give it a shot. The whole crossover's got top-notch art and, more importantly, a really good story backing it up. But what's it all about? Well, y'see, Legion went back in time to kill Magneto, only he killed his dad Prof. X instead, which resulted in a completely different cast of X-Men that are now struggling for existence in a world where Apocalypse is king! Oh, so *now* you're convinced! Join the crowd; get into this story.

2. GEN[13] #1 (limited series)

WRITER: Brandon Choi ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

X-Men Alpha #1 may have pushed *Gen[13]* #1 outta the top slot, but it sure didn't push it far. As for you Gen[13] fans who are grumblin' and growlin' over this issue being bumped from its King of the Hill slot (again—*Lady Death* #1 toppled it in *Wizard* #42, after five months in a row, but it came back in #44), don't work yourself into a frenzy or nuthin'. With the ongoing *Gen[13]* series still stoking the coals, and with the news that there's an animated flick in the works, we're bettin' this here book—starring five teenagers endowed with some pretty wicked powers and cool personalities—ain't gonna sit idly at number two for long. And hey, this freakin' Top Ten list could use some good shake-ups once in a while, anyway.

3. THE X-FILES #1

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha
ARTIST: Charles Adlard

Talk about your conspiracies! Where'd this book come from? Well, your favorite alien-abductin' junkies have jumped straight from the small screen to the fabled pages of comics. Now, on a monthly basis, you can read all about Fox Mulder and Dana Scully exposing those government freaks for the corrupt, conniving weasels that they are! The hit status that the show has garnered has apparently carried over to the comic book, making it a pretty hot commodity on the trading block. Speaking of the show, don't you think it's more than a coincidence that a guy named Fox is on a TV show on the FOX network? And why are the crackers in them peanut butter cracker snacks neon orange? Hmm...

4. LADY DEATH #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido
ARTIST: Steven Hughes

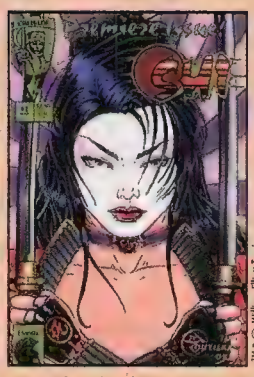
Now, here's a brilliant plan. You're banished from Earth until there's no more living beings walking around. So what do you do? Why, you try to kill off every single person on the planet, so you can once again walk the mortal world. Sounds ludicrous?

Well, that's exactly what the powerful Lady Death's trying to do, so *you* try and talk her out of it. Anyway, it kinda reminds me of an awesome *Twilight Zone* episode where Burgess Meredith finally has all the time in the world to read and he goes and breaks his glasses. (That's probably why he wears that monocle when he's the Penguin!) Hopefully Lady Death'll get a hold of ol' Burgess, but from his *Clash of the Titans* days. That guy should *not* wear a toga!

X-Men: Alpha™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. *Gen[13]* ™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc. DBA WildStorm Productions. *The X-Files* ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox. *Lady Death* ™ & © Brian Pulido.

5. SHI #1

WRITERS: William Tucci and Peter Gutierrez
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Harvey Mercadoocasio



™ & © William Elliott Tucci

Hey, here's an interesting fact. Creator-writer-artist (and all-around swell guy) Bill Tucci has reprinted *Shi* #1, so all you fans out there can get a copy of this sphlurgle (hey, I'm getting sick of saying "incredible," "awesome," "great," "fantastic"...) book. Now what this means to the first printings of this issue remains to be seen. It could be that fans will no longer look for original copies of this issue since they can get the same story for just a few bucks. However, the opposite may hold true as well. More readers will now be turned on to the hottest babe assassin this side of Elektra, and that means more fans, which means more scrambling for first printings. You know how them fanboys can be!

6. GEN[13] #2 (limited series)

WRITERS: Brandon Choi and Jeff Mariotte
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

Well, lookie here, another *Gen*[13] book! What're the odds of that? The low print run on this issue (along with that same great story and art) help make it a much sought-after book. Anyway, howzabout just for kicks, we try to come up with 13 things that rhyme with Gen? OK, here goes: Ben, hen, again, den, pen (This is too easy—let's do some tougher ones!), X-Men, Peter Tomarken (the *Press Your Luck* guy), Commissioner Gordon, Tolkien, *The Muppets Take Manhattan*, Captain America (sans America, of course), Guinan, and margarine. (And for those of you paying attention, yes, we've run out of things to write about Gen[13], and we're reduced to mindless babbling to take up space. Works, though.)

™ & © Aegis Entertainment Group Inc. DBA WildStorm Productions

7. LADY DEATH II: B. H. & H. #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido
ARTIST: Steven Hughes

™ & © Brian Pulido

The Queen of the Dead's newest miniseries not only pits her between Heaven and Hell, but between numbers six and eight on the charts! In this issue, Ms. Death (the one without the ankh, that is) recalls her origin, but it's not as rosy as she remembers. That's thanks to a certain other female fury named Purgatori, who's out to steal all of Lady Death's power for herself. And if you thought that Lady chick was bad, get yer head out o' the sand! This Purgatori freak, who's got some pretty sick wings and horns, actually bit Lucifer! Yeah, you heard that right, she took a chomp outta Beelzebub, Satan, the lord of the flies, he who drinks milk out of the carton and puts it back, the Devil!! That can't be good for you in the long run.

8. ASH #1

™ & © Quesada and Palmiotti

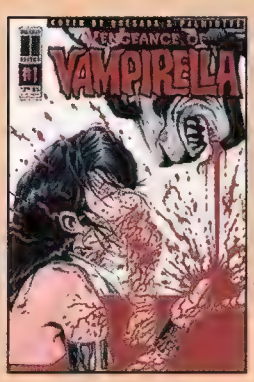
WRITERS: Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti
ARTISTS: Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti

You knew it was only a matter of time before this book became hot (that, my friends, is the longest stretch for a pun we've ever attempted). Fans have always warmed up to Quesada and Palmiotti's work, and their creator-owned fire-fightin' superhero, Ash, is no exception. Top-notch artwork and innovative storytelling makes this one a definite fun read. Plus, it's got big, fluffy, fat cats! What more could you want? Well, how 'bout a really cool costume on a guy who rides a purple motorcycle? Waitaminnit. Purple? And his real name is Ashley? So let me see if I got this right: Ashley, our hero, has big fluffy cats and a purple bike? Hmmm, if we weren't so sure Jimmy and Joe would come over here and beat the crap out of us, we'd insert some off-color jokes here. Next...

9. VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #1

WRITER: Tom Sniegoski
ARTIST: Buzz

The true original Bad Girl's still kickin'! Or bitin', I should say. Fans just can't seem to get enough of her (though they certainly *see* enough of her!). Look for fan interest to hit an all-time high, though, when Vampi's honest-to-God origin is revealed in her regular series. Shucks. We really like the original origin, which involved her having been rocketed from her exploding planet Drakulon and sent to Earth. Actually, that part's not so "original" at all, but she lost her wings and had to take blood pills to stay alive (although she's partaken of plasma quite often during the past year). There's also that new, truly bad Bad Girl, Vampi's enemy Passion (Talk about evil—this babe's soaking in it!), so Bad Girl fans have plenty to pant about.



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10. AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #400 (Coll. Ed.)

WRITER: J.M. DeMatteis
ARTISTS: Mark Bagley and Larry Mahlstedt

™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

What better way to celebrate Spidey's 400th issue, than by bringing Aunt May out of a coma...and then killing her off! Wahoo! Ding dong, the witch—I mean, the aunt is dead. Fa la la...Well, to tell you the truth, this was actually a pretty good issue. Yeah, yeah, I know we're always raggin' on those Marvel guys (especially about Spidey and his 10 gazillion clones—I mean, what were they thinking? How could...oh, sorry.), but we really enjoyed this particular book. And Aunt May's death, while a long time coming, was handled thoughtfully and poignantly. So, grab a box of Kleenex and check out this milestone issue. Of course, if it turns out that it was only Aunt May's clone that kicked the bucket, we take back any nice things we've said about them. ☆

TOP 100

Here's the list for APRIL...
a countdown of the most-ordered titles as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

(CE=Collector's Edition)

what was hot 1 year ago...

1. X-Men #33 (Marvel)
2. Spawn #21 (Image)
3. Uncanny X-Men #313 (Marvel)
4. Superman/Doomsday #1 (DC)
5. Superman/Doomsday #2 (DC)
6. Action Comics #700 (DC)
7. WildC.A.T.s #10 (Image)
8. Wolverine #82 (Marvel)
9. Adv. of Cyclops & Phoenix #2 (Marvel)
10. X-Men Unlimited #5 (Marvel)

2 years ago...

1. Adventures of Superman #500 CE (DC)
2. Action Comics #687 CE (DC)
3. Superman #78 CE (DC)
4. Adventures of Superman #501 CE (DC)
5. Superman: The Man of Steel #22 CE (DC)
6. Turok: Dinosaur Hunter #1 (Valiant)
7. Deathblow #1 (Image)
8. Spawn #12 (Image)
9. Bloodstrike #1 (Image)
10. Adventures of Superman #500 (DC)

3 years ago...

1. X-Men #9 (Marvel)
2. The Infinity War #1 (Marvel)
3. Uncanny X-Men #289 (Marvel)
4. X-Force #11 (Marvel)
5. Silver Sable #1 (Marvel)
6. Spider-Man #23 (Marvel)
7. Amazing Spider-Man #363 (Marvel)
8. Ghost Rider #26 (Marvel)
9. Spectacular Spider-Man #189 (Marvel)
10. Youngblood #3 (Image)

1. X-Men: Omega (Marvel)
2. The Amazing X-Men #4 (Marvel)
3. The Astonishing X-Men #4 (Marvel)
4. Weapon X #4 (Marvel)
5. Generation Next #4 (Marvel)
6. Gambit & The X-Ternals #4 (Marvel)
7. Factor-X #4 (Marvel)
8. X-Man #4 (Marvel)
9. X-Calibre #4 (Marvel)
10. X-Chronicles #2 (Marvel)
11. Spawn #31 (Image)
12. X-Universe #2 (Marvel)
13. Superman #101 (DC)
14. Adventures of Superman #524 (DC)
15. Superman: The Man of Steel #45 (DC)
16. Action Comics #710 (DC)
17. WildC.A.T.s #19 (Image)
18. Amazing Spider-Man #402 (Marvel)
19. Star Wars: Dark Empire II #5 (Dark Horse)
20. Pitt #9 (Image)
21. Batman #519 (DC)
22. Spider-Man #59 (Marvel)
23. Ice Age—Magic: The Gathering #2 (Acclaim)
24. Detective Comics #686 (DC)
25. Magic: The G.—The S. Mage #2 (Acclaim)
26. Spectacular Spider-Man #225 CE (Marvel)
27. Web of Spider-Man #125 CE (Marvel)
28. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #39 (DC)
29. Cyberforce #13 (Image)
30. Batman: Legends...Dark Knight #72 (DC)
31. Azrael #5 (DC)
32. Robin #17 (DC)
33. Shi #1 Variant Cover/Fan App. Ed. (Crusade)
34. Ripclaw #2 (Image)
35. Incredible Hulk #430 (Marvel)
36. X-Men 2099 A.D. #21 (Marvel)
37. Green Lantern #63 (DC)
38. Prophet #2 (Image)
39. Catwoman #21 (DC)
40. X-Files #4 Direct Edition (Topps)
41. Amazing Spider-Man Super Size #1 (Marvel)
42. Backlash #7 (Image)
43 Venom: Carnage Unleashed #3 (Marvel)
44. StormWatch #21 (Image)
45. Vengeance of Vampirella #13 (Harris)
46. Fantastic Four #401 (Marvel)
47. Justice League America #100 CE (DC)
48. Superboy #16 (DC)
49. WarBlade: Endangered Species #4 (Image)
50. Ghost #1 (Dark Horse)
51. What If...? #74 (Marvel)
52. Spider-Man 2099 A.D. #32 (Marvel)
53. Flash #102 (DC)
54. Glory #2 (Image)
55. The Maxx #15 (Image)
56. Savage Dragon #19 (Image)
57. Aliens vs. Predator War #0 (Dark Horse)
58. Batman: Gotham Nights II #4 (DC)
59. Batman: Jazz #3 (DC)
60. Neil Gaiman's Teknophage #1 (Tekno•Comix)
61. The Others #1 (Image)
62. Deathblow #15 (Image)
63. Elektra: Root of Evil #4 (Marvel)
64. Aliens vs. Predator: Duel #2 (Dark Horse)
65. Fantastic Four: Atlantis Rising #1 (Marvel)
66. Beavis & Butt-Head #16 (Marvel)
67. Star Wars: Droids #1 (Dark Horse)
68. Silver Surfer #105 (Marvel)
69. Codename: Strykeforce #13 (Image)
70. Captain America #440 (Marvel)
71. Avengers #387 (Marvel)
72. Wonder Woman #98 (DC)
73. StormWatch Special #2 (Image)
74. Aquaman #9 (DC)
75. Iron Man #317 (Marvel)
76. The Dragon: Blood & Guts #2 (Image)
77. Lobo #16 (DC)
78. Union #3 (Image)
79. The Power of Shazam! #4 (DC)
80. Tales of the Marvels: Blockbuster (Marvel)
81. Leonard Nimoy's Primortals #6 (Tekno•Comix)
82. Knightmare #3 (Image)
83. The Books of Magic #13 (DC)
84. Daredevil #341 (Marvel)
85. Badrock #2 (Image)
86. N. Gaiman's Mr. Hero...Man #6 (Tekno)
87. Brigade #19 (Image)
88. Bloodwulf #3 (Image)
89. Force Works #12 (Marvel)
90. Bloodstrike #21 (Image)
91. Thor #487 (Marvel)
92. Steel #16 (DC)
93. Shaman's Tears #8 (Image)
94. Ghost Rider #62 (Marvel)
95. Supreme #27 (Image)
96. Gene Roddenberry's Lost Universe #5 (Tekno)
97. Razor Swimsuit Special (London N. Studios)
98. Tank Girl: The Odyssey #1 (DC)
99. Ghost Rider 2099 A.D. #14 (Marvel)
100. Vampirella Classic #2 (Harris)

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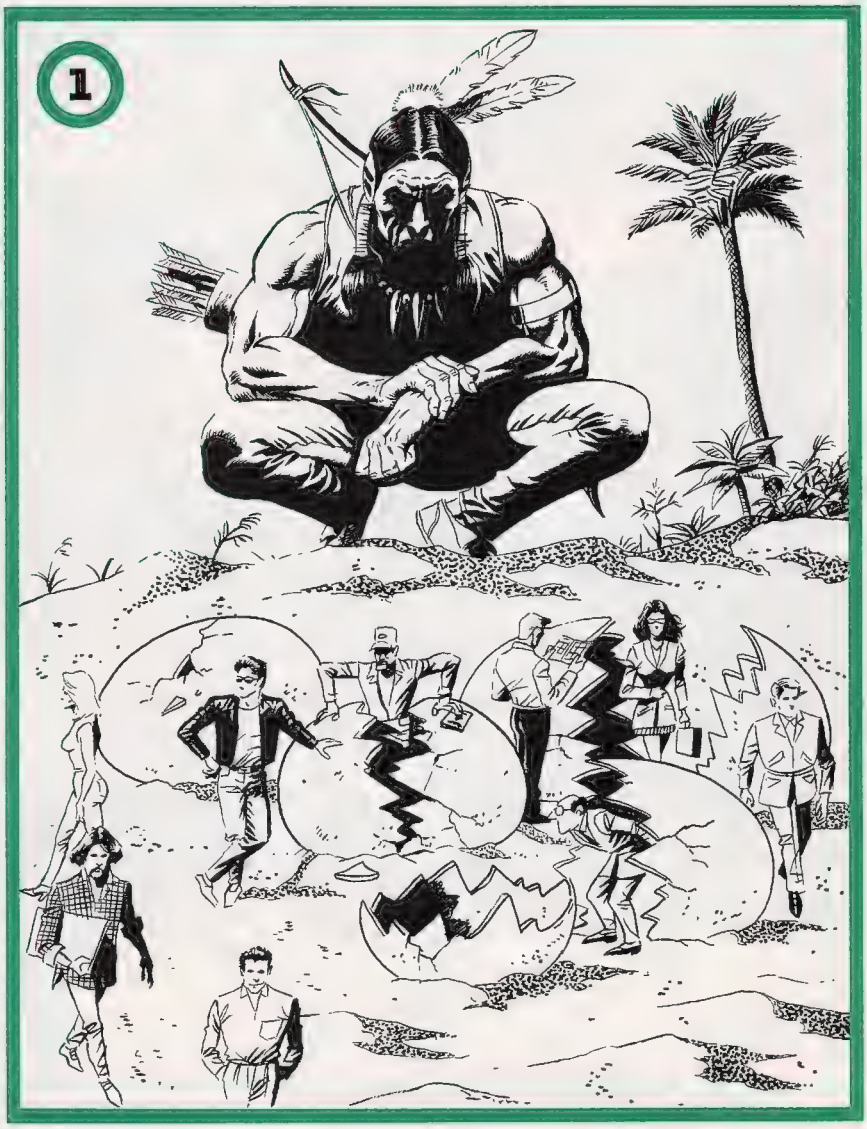
THE BIRTHQUAKE HITS YOUR HOME—AGAIN!

As Acclaim's "Birthquake" rumbles on, we're giving you another chance to jump right into it! From *Solar* by Dan Jurgens to *Ninjak* by Mike Manley, the folks at Acclaim Comics now have a ton of hot artists to celebrate the company's revolutionary "Birthquake," and they're still willing to share these artists with you!

Here's how...

Grand Prize (Two winners)

If you're one of the two randomly drawn winners in Part 2 of this happenin' contest, you'll be spending a day with a star! An Acclaim artist will fly to your hometown, and then you'll spend the rest o' the day hanging out, traveling around your town, taking in lunch 'n' dinner, and having a blast! You'll definitely get to know each other, and you'll be the talk of your neighborhood. And as if all that wasn't enough, Acclaim will set up a signing at your local comic shop—you'll sit and shmooze with the artist throughout the entire signing! This'll definitely be one exciting, memorable day!

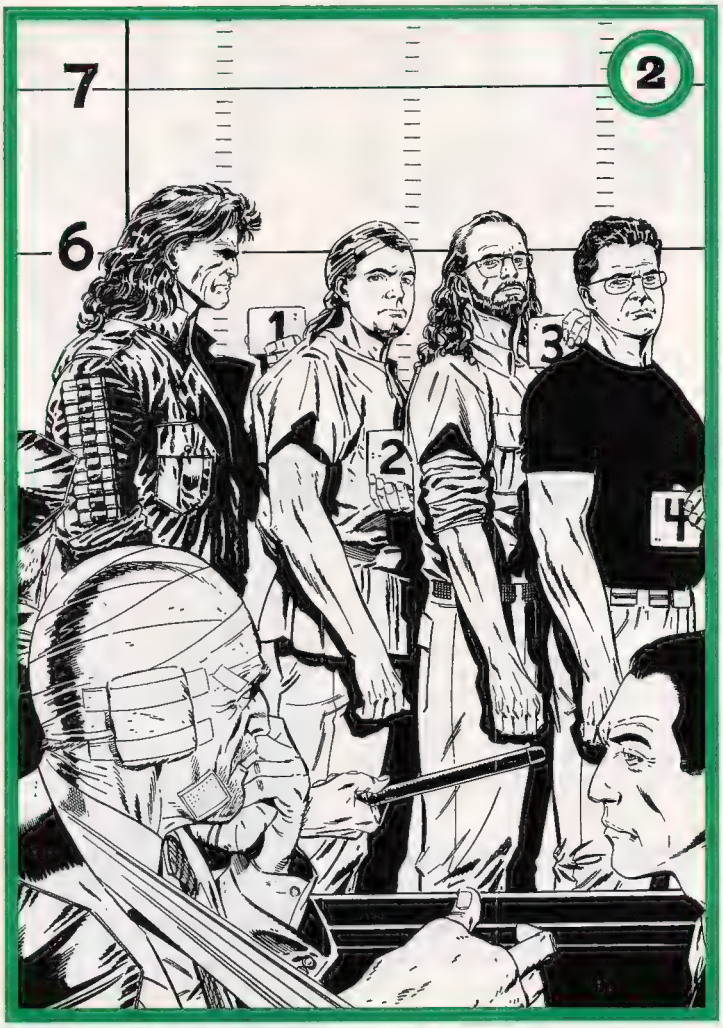


Now here's your second chance to win this pulse-poundin' prize! This issue (as we did last issue), we're displaying exclusive illustrations by two of the nine top-name Acclaim artists—from Valiant, Bart Sears, Norm Breyfogle, Bernard Chang, Rags Morales, Jackson Guice, Mike Manley, Paul Gulacy, and Dan Jurgens, and from the new Windjammer imprint, Val Mayerik—and all you have to do is figure out which artist drew each picture, and exactly where he is in the picture! Yes, each artist, along with his favorite Acclaim hero, is actually in the picture he drew. You comic knowledge megabrainies should have no prob identifying the artist of each picture, and where he is—if you're right, one of these artists may hit your town!

Here are the two pictures you have to look over.

When you've got an idea of who produced each piece and where he is in it, fill in the official entry form below with the artists' names and your personal info, cut out or photocopy each picture, circle the spot where you believe each artist is, toss the form and pictures in an envelope, and mail it all off to:

Birthquake Contest 2
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118



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This part of the contest expires July 31, 1995, so get yourself movin'!

ENTRIES DUE BY JULY 31, 1995!

Birthquake Contest 2

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE DATE OF BIRTH

ARTIST #1 IS

ARTIST #2 IS

I'VE ENCLOSED THE TWO PICTURES (OR MY PHOTOCOPIES OF 'EM)!

LEGAL STUFF

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Acclaim Comics, their immediate families, and people who can't even find the shovel in the tree when they read *Highlights* in the doctor's office. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the names of the two artists on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card, and place the form or card in an envelope with the two pictures (originals or photocopies), with the location of each artist circled on each picture. Mail each entry to Birthquake Hits Home Contest Part 2, c/o Wizard Press, PO Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the contest winners and are not transferable. Winner must accept arrangements on dates provided by Wizard Press or forfeit prize. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Why would anyone want to live in California, with all the quakes happening there? So there's babes...and perfect weather...and celebrities...well, I guess that's why. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by July 31, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on August 1, 1995, by Wizard Press.

For the names of the winners of Part 2 of this contest, available after August 18, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Birthquake Part 2 Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

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Wizard Market Watch

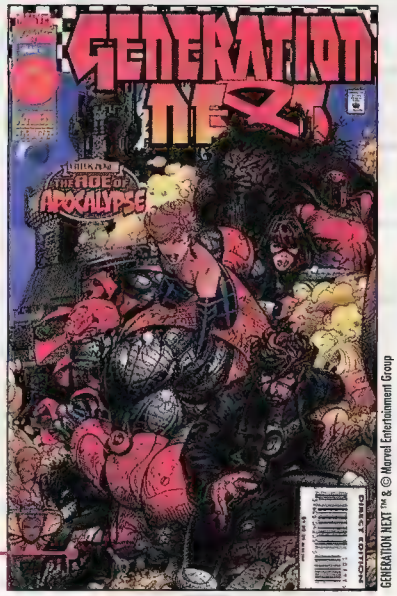
by **Jon Warren**
and **Marc Wilkofsky**

Shelf-Steamers and Box-Burners

Just when you think you've got the mischievous comics market pinned down in predictability, the out-of-nowhere "must-haves" pop out from hiding and the sleepers spring from collector-friendly anonymity to alarming hyperactivity. Well, we can't do much to tame the ever-wild market for you, but we've definitely got a handle on a few corners you can approach with confidence. There's a lot to cover, so let's go!

THE HOT RECENT RELEASES (1991-95)

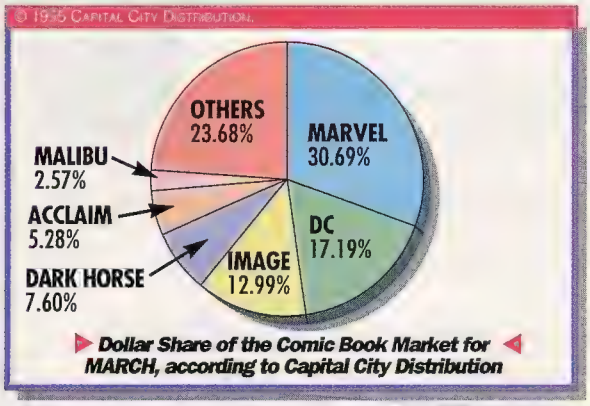
• **The X-Men titles** (Marvel Comics). As the creators controlling the Marvel mutant line have taken their "Age of Apocalypse" story to another level of reality, the X-books have reached new levels of excitement and popularity. If you haven't picked up any installments of the successful timeflip titles—which include the hot **Generation Next**, ***X-Man***, ***Amazing X-Men***, and ***Astonishing X-Men***—then you're missing a boat of thrills, not to mention a whole flock of quick-rising #1s (all the monthly X-ers have seen value gains in their first timeflip issues, with ***Weapon X* #1**—the beginning of a brand-new look at number one mutant Wolverine—taking off and leading proudly). And don't assume you're going to find December's epic-opener ***X-Men: Alpha*** for cover price anywhere—it's been taking some serious market strides lately. Also be on the lookout for ***X-Man*** back issues to move in the future, as it will be the lone timeflip book to continue after "Apocalypse" is done.



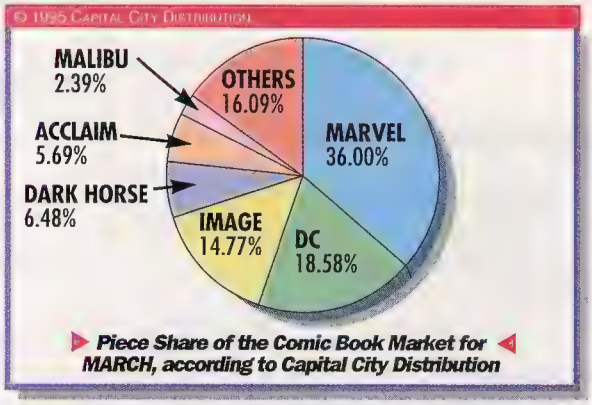
GENERATION NEXT™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

• ***Rogue*** and ***Gambit*** (Marvel). The star-crossed mutants who can never really touch one another have something in common, other than mutual burning desire: a just-as-hot reader interest. Rogue's recent mini-series gave her the spotlight hordes of fans have been clamoring for, and is moving quite well in the back issue market, while Gambit's own four-issue outing—including the still-heavily-requested gold version of #1—is sharing the current excitement over his second mini-series (of sorts), *Gambit and the X-Ternals*. Like a well-thrown punch from these two lovers, you can't miss with these books.

• ***X-Files*** (Topps). Real strong stories, real hot book, *real* good timing. Phenomenon is the right word for this market-rocking TV adaptation: ***X-Files* #1** is one of the top books to find right now, after an enormous wave of people—comic collectors and many "outsiders"—latched onto this exciting comic version of the Golden Globe-award-winning sci-fi show. **#2** and **#3** didn't take much time to pick up solid sales speed, of course. The sky



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for MARCH, according to Capital City Distribution



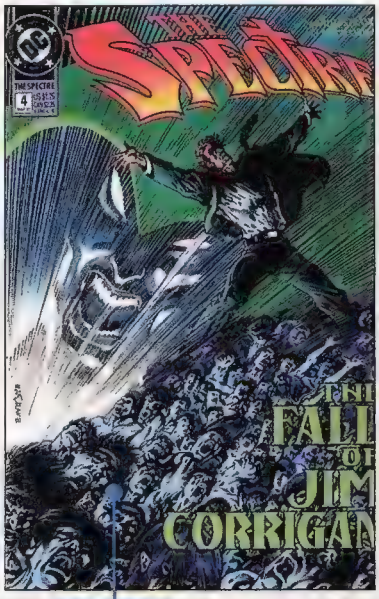
Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for MARCH, according to Capital City Distribution

DOLLAR SHARE: DC's share went down 1.2 points in March, mainly attributable to its only publishing books for three weeks during the month, to get its month-to-month schedule back on track. March was not exactly Marvel's month, in that the company's dollar share dropped by 1.32 points from February—probably a result of a slight drop in interest over the timeflip X-epic and Spider-saga. Dark Horse's higher-than-normal amount of product and Acclaim's successful "Birthquake"/*Magic* releases helped these companies' shares.

PIECE SHARE: Acclaim's first two *Magic: The Gathering* books and initial barrage of bi-weekly "Birthquake" books gave the revitalized company a 1.61 gain here, while Dark Horse's increase in product helped its piece share (up 1.4). Marvel's Dollar Share loss wasn't reflected here—its huge number of books released in March brought the company's share up 1.1 points—while DC's heavy drop came from its shipment of fewer books. Image and Malibu "suffered" negligible drops, as these two companies keep bringing readers and collectors back each month.

might not even be the limit for this series.

• **Superman books** (DC Comics). He may not be monstrous or stupid, but he could be the Doomsday of today: new Superfoe **Conduit** is the creep who's discovered that Clark Kent and Supes are one and the same, and Mr. Braverman's intro issues—the four already-strong **Superman #0 books**, especially *Superman: Man of Steel* and *Superman*—are drawing heat from this very fact. People want to know all about the psycho who forced Kal-El to kill his reporter alias, and the four-part "Peer Pressure" story in the zero books obliges perfectly.



THE SPECTRE™ & © DC Comics

• **The Spectre** (DC). Word-of-mouth on the Astral Avenger's latest series is attracting more and more seekers of good-readin'-books to John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake's masterpiece. **#1** is slowly floating up to new planes of collectability; we suggest you watch this and all the **early issues** of the Spectre's current, and most successful, series.

• **Steady DC sellers.** ***Flash* #92**, the debut of junior speedster Impulse, is a regular riser in the *Wizard* Price Guide, and right from its start, young Bart's brand-new series (which he earned after less than a year of existence—pretty darn fast!) is giving this issue a hefty push. Also, ***Sandman* #1** and **#8** (Death's entrance) have lifetime memberships in the Price Hike Club; their own latest push—as if they needed it—is the *end* of ol' Sandy's series, happening in late '95. With the second *Death* mini-series, *The Dreaming* ongoing series, and probably countless other Vertigo spin-offs in the works, these issues, and the title in general, will certainly survive.

• **Image hits.** ***Gen*[13]** is far from the solo star in Image's publishing line. The title's fellow WildStormers ***Team 7*** (the first issue may have slowed down for a while, but not its variant cover edition) and ***WetWorks*** (#1 is a steady mover, as is the variant edition of #2—fans still want violence and variants) are joined by Todd McFarlane's ***Angela*** mini-series, the integral Spawn epic that many knew would savor dramatic market activity.

• **Image misses.** Unfortunately, value drops for ***Prophet* #4A**—the Platt-covered version—and the Gold editions of ***Youngblood* #0** and ***Youngblood: Strikefile* #1** (we're talkin' *huge* drops for these two, folks) indicate that collectors are yawning about (and retailers are frantically trying to dump) some once-big Image books.

• **Those nutty Bad Girls** (various publishers). ***Evil Ernie's* first series** by Eternity, as well as Chaos!'s ***The Resurrection***, continue to ravage the market thanks to **Lady Death**, whose original mini-series is hotter'n ever. **Shi** (whose #1 reprint should increase the title's fanship) and **Vampirella** are still kickin' in high gear, while London Night Studios's **Razor**—whose #0 and #1 continue to shake up the market—is virtually unstoppable.

• **DC's Bad Girls.** Meanwhile, who can't help but flip wallet-over-heels for DC's diamond-lovin' damsel, **Catwoman**? The first issue of her hit series is as collectible as ever, along with her full mini-series (see our "Modern Age" focus). Her fellow DC heroine, **Wonder Woman**, is in her finest hour nowadays. Thanks to Bad Girl

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

1 — Photo: Al Ortega

Todd McFarlane
Spawn

2 — Photo: Al Ortega

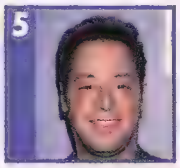
Frank Miller
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill

3

Buzz
Vengeance of Vampirella

4

Greg Capullo
Spawn


5

Joe Quesada
Ash

6

Jim Lee
WildC.A.T.s

7 — Photo: Sampsel & Preston

J. Scott Campbell
Gen[13]

8 — Photo: J. Schuyler

Adam Kubert
Wolverine

9 — Photo: J. Schuyler

Andy Kubert
X-Men

10

Bart Sears
X-O Manowar

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

1 — Photo: Al Ortega

Neil Gaiman
Sandman

2 — Photo: Al Ortega

Frank Miller
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill

3

Peter David
Incredible Hulk, Aquaman, Spider-Man 2099

4

John Byrne
Next Men, upcoming: Wonder Woman

5 — Photo: Al Ortega

Jeff Smith
Bone

6 — Photo: J. Schuyler

John Ostrander
The Spectre, Eternal Warrior

7

Dan Jurgens
Superman, Solar

8 — Photo: Al Ortega

Fabian Nicieza
X-Men

9 — Photo: J. Schuyler

Scott Lobdell
Uncanny X-Men, Generation X

10 — Photo: Mitch Jenkins

Alan Moore
From Hell, upcoming: Spawn: Bloodfeud, WildC.A.T.s

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

Market WATCHERS

Dear Marc,

I follow *Wizard*'s Market Watch regularly and carefully monitor the price changes in the guide each month. I also compare *Wizard*'s information with the current trends and prices in the local comic shops and shows. I find that the *Wizard* "picks" and "ones to watch" have a profound effect on the local market. A good example is the recent run of *Wonder Woman* books, starting with issue #88. *Wizard* recognizes #88 as "Circe's return as a Bad Girl" and lists it at #8 on the Top Ten. I don't have a problem with this. If *Wizard* wants to recognize Circe as a "Bad Girl," that's fine, and listing the book in the Top Ten is simply reporting on the market. However, I feel that *Wizard* has been focusing too much on Circe's appearances in issue #88 and #89. I believe that readers are snapping *WW*'s up for the artwork of Mike Deodato Jr. in #90 and up (mentioned in the Market Watch of *Wizard* #42) and the current storyline involving Artemis as the new WW. Thus, *Wizard* should be focusing on pointing out that issue #90 is the first appearance of Artemis (correct me if I'm wrong), and the first regular penciling of Deodato. Another book that *Wizard* should mention is issue #85, which contains the first pencil work of Deodato (on *Wonder Woman*, anyway), and at the end it shows Diana's friend Julia after being smashed to a pulp—a definite catalyst in Diana's new attitude.

I just think that these are important points to mention when discussing the *WW* hot trend, and they shouldn't be overlooked. Issues #88 and #89, the Circe books, suck. But #90-plus are awesome.

Until *Wonder Woman* outsells the X-Men,

Keric K. Morinaga
Pasadena, CA

You definitely know your Wonderinfo, Keric. I agree with all your points, and hope you approve of our recent Market Watch mentions of the Bad Amazon's book—we've covered just about everything you said regarding this exciting trend, and more. And yes, Artemis does indeed debut in issue #90, a strong-selling issue.

Dear Market Watchers,

In light of the aftermath of *Zero Hour*, I recently began going through my *Crisis* collection. I came across a comic titled *The Official Crisis on Infinite Earths Crossover Index*, published by the Independent Comics Group in July 1986. I have three questions concerning this issue: 1) The forward mentioned a *previous* index and that this was an updated version; however, this index was listed as a #1 and there is no mention of it being a reprint. Do you have info on the first index? 2) The index was co-written by Mark Waid, and the cover was inked by Tom Mandrake. Are these the same folks of *Flash* and *The Spectre* fame? 3) How much, if anything, is this issue worth? Thanks!

Daniel Dawson
Yukon, OK

Daniel, the "updated version" you have is more like a supplement to ICG's original *Official Crisis on Infinite Earths Index*, which offered the credits, characters, and synopses of all 12 *Crisis* issues. Your book catalogs the 50-plus crossovers to DC's first—and best, I believe—clean-up series. (Y'know, ICG always produced interesting, informative, and in-depth indices! I really miss 'em.) Yes, those contributors are the *Flash* writer/comics historian and *Spectre* artist, and your book should be worth 'bout $1.25 in Near Mint ("If anything?" *Everything's* worth something), but I bet any *Crisis*phile you find will give you the $1.75 cover price for your book.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 150

Circe (**#88** and **#89**) and Mike Deodato Jr.'s stellar artwork (**#85** and **#90 up**), this wondrous babe is heatin' up the charts. And look for John Byrne to write and draw some great adventures for the Amazon, starting in July.

• ***Ash*** (Event Comics). Just a reminder: if you see a copy of *Ash* **#1** or **#2** smoldering on a comic rack in a store somewhere at a reasonable price, consider picking it up because you *seriously* might not get another chance. This title from Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's new company entered the publishing world last November with high reader anticipation and a fairly low print run, and has already garnered a loyal fan base and explosive rarity. **#3** should be out now, too, and believe us, it's a worthwhile type of collector's item—an excellent-reading book.

• **Sleeper titles** (various publishers). Keep an eye out for a few books that, apparently, are viewed as seizable by only certain sections of today's collecting crowd. Thanks to scores of "highway signs" advertising the company's products along the market road, a few buyers are braking for Tekno•Comix's qualitative offerings. Neil Gaiman's creative connection to ***Mr. Hero—The Newmatic Man,*** and Leonard Nimoy's to ***Primortals***, have assuredly helped these titles as much as Tekno's first Bad Girl book, May's *Lady Justice*, should boost sales for the line as a whole. Then there's Harris's late '94 ***Chains of Chaos*** mini-series, which not only starred hot babe Vampirella, but re-introduced the time-traveling mystic named the Rook, an old Warren Publications hero who's about to enter his own series. Link One of this mini has interesting market potential. Finally, ***Penthouse Comix*** (which our moms won't let us talk about too much here) may have its own limited market niche and body of collectors (and may be doing its own unique things to these people), but after months of price increases, it shouldn't be overlooked as a...um, grabbable series.

MODERN AGE SELLERS (1970-90)

• ***Amazing Spider-Man*** (Marvel). Talk about a Big Bang theory going bust: ***ASM* #149-#151**, which introduced the Spidey-Clone, were blazing hot last summer, but have definitely cooled, as the furor surrounding the present ongoing (and going...) clone story has begun calming down. The market apparently overreacted, prices are stabilizing, and these books aren't worth anywhere near as much money—and space in this column—as they used to be.

• **Other hot MA books** (various publishers). Cat-chasers are starting to fervently pounce on every issue of DC's 1989 ***Catwoman*** mini-series, as more people get interested in Batman's beautiful supporting character. Also, Marvel's unflappable ***Giant-Size X-Men* #1** (the debut of the second X-group from 1975) sees another price jump this month—the timeflip's surge of popularity into the mutant titles seems to have hit issues from all ages. Even ***Dazzler* #38**, one of the few big books in her little series because of its X-Men appearance, is lighting up the market again. On the independent comic side, Aardvark-Vanaheim's ***Flaming Carrot* #1** is a choice piece of Modern Age work—there will always be a major cult following of Bob Burden's surreal hero, and recent value activity on his first issue indicates there are even more fans out there!

POPULAR SILVER AGE BOOKS (1955-70)

• ***X-Men*** (Marvel). Early issues of the original *X-Men* series remain near the top of the list of hot-selling Silver Age Marvels.

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Yorktown Heights, NY 10598-0656

Among the issues most in demand by collectors are **#1** (the first appearance and origin of the mutant group), **#12** (Professor X's origin), and **#28** (the debut of Generation X co-leader Banshee).

• ***Teen Titans* #1** (DC). The teen group's first issue from 1966 is often overlooked by collectors, but demand for it has recently expanded. Bob Reid in Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y., just sold a Very Fine-plus copy for $200, and more and more collectors are looking into this issue.

• ***Amazing Fantasy* #15** (Marvel). The first appearance and origin of Spider-Man is still the Marvel mega-key that sells the fastest at shows and through mail-order. By the way, most early ***Amazing Spider-Man*** issues are selling well, particularly **#14**, **#28**, and **#50**.

• ***Incredible Hulk* #1-#6** (Marvel). This early run, which includes the Green Goliath's first appearance and origin, is once again among the top Silver Age titles sought by collectors. Demand remains strong in all grades. On the other hand, demand for *Incredible Hulk* #102, the first issue of the newer series from 1968, has dipped this month.

• **Various Marvel titles.** The hottest Marvels from this time period are first issues and first appearances of major characters. Retailers report very strong demand for 1950s horror titles like ***Journey into Mystery*** and ***Strange Tales***. ***Avengers* #1** and **#4** (the latter of which is the return of Captain America and his entrance into the Silver Age) are in high demand, and are selling well, while demand for ***Captain America* #100**, and other early issues of Cap's title, has slowed.

THE GOLDEN AGE MARKET (1938-54)

In a nutshell: The market for Golden Age superhero titles from all publishers remains very hot. Of the superhero books, those published by Timely Publications are the hottest.

• ***Action Comics* #1** (DC). The first appearance and origin of Superman is now officially the most valuable comic. The folks at Pacific Comic Exchange of Los Angeles, Calif., confirm that a Very Fine copy of this classic issue was sold by their firm for $137,500—setting a new world record price for a comic book.

• ***All-Flash Comics* #1** (DC). This classic and important first issue from 1941 retells the origin of the original Flash (that's Jay Garrick, for you more present-oriented folks). Steve Fishler at Metropolis in New York City recently sold a Near Mint copy for $15,000.

And that wraps up another edition of Market Watch, which we hope made you a richer collector (in market knowledge, at least), and taught you some new ways to say that something's hot. See you next time! ☆

The Warren-Wilkofsky team never misses a deadline. Without a good reason, that is. [You've gotta be kidding me, fellas.—Editor.]

Dear Market Watchers,

I have two comics that are not listed in the price guide. The first one is Marvel's *Indiana Jones* #3, made way back in 1983. The second is *Dino Riders* #1. How much is each issue worth?

Steven Dobbs
Talladega, AL

Indy's book—which was done by John Byrne, by the way—will earn you a whole buck. As for *Dino Riders*—50 cents, at the absolute *most*. Spare yourself the embarrassment, Dobbs—keep these babies.

Hey, Wilkofsky:

Before I ask my question, I just want to make a minor statement to all comic book readers out there: Hey, you guys! Wanna lot of bang, but don't have a lotta buck? Just check out your local comic store 25-cent box. Those things don't just have old *Barbie* and *Power Pack* comics. In fact, they're usually full of really good stuff waiting for a home! Trust me on this one; you just might find something to your liking.

Anyhow, I just found a DC comic in Prestige Format called *Martian Manhunter*, a.k.a. J'onzz J'on or something, #2 from '92, and I was just wondering how much it's worth and where I might find #1 and #3. Please help me on this one!

T'anks fer yer time,

Richard Taylor
Vallejo, CA

Hey, Richard, you answered your own questions with your fine suggestion; that mini-series, though a cool read, has a fairly permanent residence in the bargain bins (sorta like any album by Men at Work or Kim Carnes). Just keep searching one 50-cent box after another in any comic store or con you hit—you'll be sure to snag those issues. By the way, the Justice League Task Force leader's "civilian" name is J'onn J'onzz—but don't worry, even DC itself spelled it wrong in March's *Adventures of Superman* #522. Yer welcome, Richard.

Dear "Marc"et Watchers,

Has this ever happened to you?

You walk into a comic store you've never been in before and the guy at the counter stares at you. You say something like "How are you?" or "Hi," and the guy won't say anything back. Then, when you ask where the X-Men comics are, he points, and stares at you while you walk over to them. While you're thumbing through them, you ask the guy a question, and he answers with a stern "I don't know." Then you go up to the counter with the comic you want and you ask if the new X-book is out. He reaches under the counter and tosses one in front of you with no bag. After you pay and start to head out the door, you notice a whole stack of bags that are priced higher than normal. And they're the cheap kind!!!

Well, after having an experience like that, I would not go back to that store unless I needed a comic *really* badly. I think comic store workers should at least be friendly and help you try to find that special comic you want. They should know something about what they're selling, like they do at the store I go to. The owner knows what he has and where it is, and most of the old back issues are bagged and boarded. Plus, when you get new comics in your order, he gives you bags at no extra cost. If people were more like him, comic book collecting wouldn't be such a hassle.

Adam Mica Heald
Hubert, NC

I'm sure a lot of our readers are nodding their heads, Adam, but you're actually calling attention to two retailer subjects here: customer service and customer bonuses. Most retailers interested in keeping their clientele know that treating 'em well and being consistently helpful is key. However, many can't afford to hand out extras with every purchase, even things as inexpensive as comic bags and backing boards, which don't magically appear in stores, but must be bought by the owners in bulk. So no collector should blame a local retailer for not being too "giving" bonus-wise, but those who go that extra mile (like your guy) are much more worthy of respect—and continued patronage—than one doing a Jabba the Hutt impression behind the counter.

A couple of things before I'm off: last month's April Fool letter was from Ben Reade (in case you were fooled). Also, I've received several letters regarding my back issue vs. new book question in #44—watch this space for a select bunch of 'em (and send more!). Well, *adiós*—I'm outta here!

-Marc Wilkofsky
Evolutionary Error

Hey, Market Watchers! Send your letters to:

MARKET WATCHERS
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

To help connect you with the biggest and best comic book shows and conventions in your area, *Wizard* is still printing all the stuff we used to print in this department. But we've added extra space so you can find out in advance about admission discounts, creator appearances, and other superneat stuff!

These listings are as accurate as we can get 'em, but *Wizard* always recommends phoning ahead before you attend an event—show information sometimes changes after we go to press. With that in mind, it's time for all you comic-hungry hordes to go conventioneering!

ALABAMA

MAY 20, HUNTSVILLE

Card, Comic, and Racing Show, Jaycee Community Bldg., Old Airport Road, 35 tables @ $30 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm. Contact: Linda or Clay Pogue @ 615-962-2354 days or 615-469-7227 nights.

CALIFORNIA

JUNE 2-4, SAN FRANCISCO

SUPER COMIC, CARD, TOY & *MAGIC: THE GATHERING* EXPO, Cow Palace, Geneva Ave. & Santos, 200 tables (call for cost), $5 admission per day (3-day pass: $12; children under 6: free), Fri. Noon-8pm, Sat./Sun. 10am-6pm. GUESTS: Image creators—Cedric Nocon (*Supreme, Extreme Sacrifice, Team Youngblood*), Chance Wolf (*ShadowHawk, ShadowHawk/Vampirella, Spawn* toy comics), Aron Wiesenfeld (*Team 7*), Richard Bennett (*WildC.A.T.s, Savage Dragon*), Monica Bennett (*WetWorks, Gen*^{13}, *StormWatch*), Chris Alexander (*Bloodstrike*), plus a preview of Image's upcoming *Brass*. Also, DC's Scott Baumann (*Blood Pack, Loose Cannon*), more guests & celebrities. Featuring Golden, Silver, and Modern Age comics, toys, figures, sportscards, Starting Lineup, games, *Star Wars/Star Trek* memorabilia, animation and more. Panel discussions, Q & A sessions, bring your portfolio. Premium prizes. Original Image Artwork Sale. Huge *MAGIC: THE GATHERING* AREA (Dealers, Tournaments, Gaming, and Prizes). Contact: Bill Lee on the Expo hotline @ 415-522-3838.

DELAWARE

MAY 21, DOVER

Super Con, Sheraton, Rt. 13 South, 50 tables @ $60 each, $3 admission. Special guest to be announced. Over $1,000 in door prizes donated by major comic publishers. Grand Prize of $100 in show cash. Free comic packs to the first 100 paid attendees. Contact: Derek Woywood of Collector's Comics @ 609-782-0817.

MAY 21, NEWARK

Small Wonder, Newark Best Western, I-95 & Route 273—Dover Exit, 40 tables @ $50 each, $3 admission, 10am-4:30pm. Surprise guest! Free gift for the first 200 people. Featuring comics, toys, cards, videos, and more. Contact: Joe Hummel @ 302-456-3055.

FLORIDA

JUNE 4, TAMPA

Tampa Comic Book MEGA-SHOW, Colony Hotel, 820 E. Busch Blvd. (I-275, Exit #33), 60 tables @ $50 each, $3 admission, 10am-5pm. Special guest signers to be announced. Autograph certificates available. Contact: Skyline Promotions @ 407-426-7745.

INDIANA

JUNE 2-4, INDIANAPOLIS

Indy-Monthly Comic Show, Eastgate Mall, 7150 East Washington Street, 35-plus 8-foot dealer tables @ $60 each or 2 for $95, free admission. *Magic* Tournament on June 3rd. For dealer and show information, call Rick Garcia of Hoosier Sportcards @ 317-357-9999.

LOUISIANA

MAY 20, COVINGTON

Northshore Comic Book & Sportscards Show, Holiday Inn, Hwy. 190 @ I-12, 25 tables @ $50 each, $1 admission, 10am-5pm. Guests: John Dell (inker for DC Comics's *Lobo* and *Chain Gang War*), Jason Temujin Minor (inker for DC Comics's *Animal Man*, Malibu Comics's *Godwheel*, and Marvel Comics's *Deadpool*), and Daniel Presedo (publisher and artist for *Dream Wolves*). They will be signing. Contact: Mike Lynch @ 504-923-2349.

MARYLAND

MAY 21, GAITHERSBURG

Capital Associates, Gaithersburg Holiday Inn, 2 Montgomery Village Ave., 65 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeff Rocen @ 703-503-5834.

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 21, ROCKLAND

BIG CAT Productions presents The Monthly Comic, Toy, and Non-Sports Card Show, Ramada Inn, Exit 14 (Route 228) off of Route 3, 35 tables @ $50 each (2 for $75), $2 admission, 11am-4pm. **Guests: *Vampirella* writer Tom Sniegoski and *Vampirella* artist to be announced.** *Magic* cards, toys (*Star Wars*, Megos, etc.), art, POGs, and thousands of hard-to-find and bargain comics. Free credit raffles and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

MAY 28, BURLINGTON

BIG CAT Productions presents The Monthly Comic, Toy, and Non-Sport Card Show at the VFW Hall, Exit 34 Winn Street (next to Marshall Simons Junior High), 35 tables @ $50 each (2 for $75), $2 admission, 11am-4pm, *Magic* cards, toys (*Star Wars*, Megos, etc.), art, POGs, and thousands of hard-to-find and bargain comics. Most comics 50 percent off guide and cheaper! Free credit raffles and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

MAY 7, NASHUA

BIG CAT Productions presents The Monthly Comic, Toy, and Non-Sport Card Show, Holiday Inn, Exit 4 off Route 3, 35 8-foot tables @ $50 each (2 for $75), $2 admission, 11am-4pm. *Magic* cards, toys (*Star Wars*, Megos, etc.), art, POGs, and thousands of hard-to-find and bargain comics. Free credit raffles and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

NEW JERSEY

MAY 7, BORDENTOWN

Comic Book Marketplace, The Days Inn Hotel, Route 206 North off Exit 7 of the New Jersey Turnpike, 30 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Chris Taylor (*Blood Pack, Legion of Super-Heroes*), Steve Henel and Beatriz Paven (*Xenya*). Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955.

MAY 28, TINTON FALLS

Monmouth County Comic Con, Holiday Inn, 700 Hope Road, Garden State Pkwy. Exit 105, 40 tables @ $45 each, $2 admission, 9:30am-4:30pm. Guests: Daniel A. Reed (*New World Order*) and Neil Vokes (*Jurassic Park*). Contact: Dan Campbell @ 908-571-5316 or 908-222-2516.

MAY 28, WAYNE

Wayne Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn, Rt. 46 East Service Rd., 30 8-foot tables @ $55 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Special features: primarily comic books (all eras and prices), some non-sports cards and toys, hourly door prizes, old-fashioned **no-minimum-bid** auctions. Show us your *Wizard* magazine for a $2 merchandise credit with your paid admission. Contact: B. Brzezinska @ 201-783-0608.

MAY 28-29, WOODBRIDGE

Comic Book Marketplace, The Sheraton Hotel, 515 Route 1 South, across from the Woodbridge Mall, 40 tables @ $150 each, $5 daily admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Al Williamson (*Flash Gordon*), Tim & Greg Hildebrandt (*Marvel Masterpieces* cards), Curt Swan (*Superman*), Keith Giffen (*Trencher*). Sunday only: Murphy Anderson (*Hawkman*), Joe Staton (*Legends of the Dark Knight*), Kurt Schaffenberger (*Lois Lane*). Monday only: John Hebert (*X-Men Adventures*), Dave Hunt (*Little Mermaid*), John Workman (*Flash Gordon*), Rudy Nebres (*Conan*), Charles Barnett III (*Star Trek: T.N.G, Shadowheart*), Michael Avon Oeming (*Judge Dredd*), Howard Bender (*Spider-Man Magazine*), and many more. Plus a cartoon film show, panels, a charity art auction on Monday, and much more. Some guests are tentative; please call for updates. Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955.

NEW YORK

JUNE 4, FISHKILL

Toylectifest, Holiday Inn, Exit 13 off I-84 onto Rt. 9 North, 90 tables (call for pricing), $4 admission, 9am-4pm. Guests: to be announced. All the best classic and modern toys and collectibles. Everything from G.I. Joe to Megos to *Star Wars*

to modern superheroes. Collectors can also find die-cast vehicles, comics, dolls, trains, non-sport cards, and everything else imaginable. Contact: Paul Tracy @ 914-831-9381.

NORTH CAROLINA

MAY 28, WINSTON SALEM

Comic Book, Trading Card, and Toy Show, Holiday Inn West—Silas Creek Parkway, 30 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. *Star Wars* toys! Contact: Mark @ 704-787-3911.

OHIO

MAY 21, COLUMBUS

Columbus Toy & Comic Convention, Aladdin Temple Shrine Mosque, Exit 32 (Morse Road), off of I-270 Northeast, 410 tables @ $35 each, $4 admission (children under 12: $2), $1 off with this *Wizard* ad, 10am-4pm. Contact: Vaughn Crispin @ 412-539-8821.

JUNE 4, HUDSON

Comic Book & Non-Sports Card Show, Hudson Holiday Inn, Rt. 8 @ Ohio Tpke. Exit 12, 40 6-foot tables @ $40 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Steve Weimer @ 216-650-4039 for more information.

JUNE 11, YOUNGSTOWN

Youngstown-Warren Comic Con, Holiday Inn-Metroplex, I-80 & Rt. 193, Exit 229, 33 8-foot tables @ $45 each in advance, $2 admission (children 6 and under: FREE), 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056.

PENNSYLVANIA

MAY 7, PHILADELPHIA

Comic-Con, Holiday Inn, 4th and Arch, 30 tables @ $50 each, $3 admission, 10am-4:30pm. Special guest to be announced. Over $1,000 in door prizes donated by major comic publishers. Grand Prize of $100 in show cash. Free *X-Files* promo cards and five comics to the first 100 paid attendees. Contact: Derek Woywood of Collector's Comics @ 609-782-0817.

MAY 12-14, PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh Comicon II, Monroeville Expo Mart, take Exit 6 off PA Tpke., follow signs to Business Rt. 22 for two miles (down 7 traffic lights), and you're there. 200 booths @ $300 each, $8/one-day or $20/three-day admission, Friday: 12 noon-6pm, Saturday: 10am-6pm, Sunday: 10am-5pm. Contact: Michael or Reneé George @ 814-467-4116.

TENNESSEE

MAY 7, NASHVILLE

Nashville Tennessee Comic Book Convention, Ramada Inn, Briley Pkwy. & I-40 near the airport, 40 tables @ $50 each or 2 for $90, $2 admission, or $1 if you show this *Wizard* ad, 9am-4pm. Comics, toys, original art, *Magic* and *Star Trek* gaming cards, and autographs. Guests: Joel Thomas (*Spawn, Deathblow, Prime, Evil Ernie*), Dean Zachary (*The Ferret, The Night Man, Green Lantern*), Dave Johnson (*SuperPatriot, Chain Gang War, WildStorm* trading cards), Todd Fox (*Marvel Comics Presents, Racer X, Punisher War Journal*, and *Mr. T & The T-Force*), Sam Payne (*The Strangers, Judgment Day*), and Chad Sergesketter (*Comrades of War*). First 50 attendees receive a gift. For more information, call Michael Bray @ 615-367-1405 or Marc Ballard @ 615-520-3289.

TEXAS

MAY 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, HOUSTON

Card, Comic and POG Convention, Holiday Inn, I-10 & Silber, 7611 Katy Frwy., Exit Silber, 15 tables @ $25 each, free admission, 6pm-10pm. Free admission every Wednesday night. Come out and buy, sell, and trade. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

MAY 7, AUSTIN

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Quality Inn South, 2200 South 1H-35 at Oltorf, 50 tables @ $55 each, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

MAY 7, HOUSTON

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Marriott Greenspoint, 255 North Sam Houston Pkwy. East, 50 tables @ $70 each, $2 each, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

MAY 7, SAN ANTONIO

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, I-10 West at 410 West behind Malibu, 45 tables @ $55 each, $1 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

MAY 13, HOUSTON

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Hilton Hotel S.W., 6780 S.W. Frwy. Exit Hillcroft, 30 tables @ $70 each, $2 admission, 9:30am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

MAY 13, HOUSTON

The Dark Side of the Moon Comic Book Convention, The Sheraton Grand Hotel, 2525 West Loop South (Galleria Area), 60 tables @ $65 or $70 each (Call for more information), $3 admission, 10am-4pm. Twice as big! Bigger comic auction, more video games, more local comic creators, bigger art contest, bigger gaming space. More cartoon AND movie screenings. Huge door prizes every 1/2 hour, and free 1st issue comic to the first 200 attendees. Contact: Jason Ginsburg @ 713-664-5224.

MAY 20, SAN ANTONIO

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, I-10 West at 410 West behind Malibu, 35 tables @ $55 each, $1 admission, 9am-3:30pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

MAY 20, 21, HOUSTON

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Holiday Inn, I-10 & Silber, 7611 Katy Frwy., Exit Silber, 45 tables @ $125 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

MAY 21, AUSTIN

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Holiday Inn South, 3401 South I-H35, 45 tables @ $55 each, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

MAY 21, HOUSTON

Carnival '95, Holiday Inn Hobby, 9600 Gulf Freeway, I-45 South (College Airport exit), 60 tables (call for pricing), $3 admission (children under 10: free), 10:30am-5pm. Guests: To be announced. Tons of comics, *Magic* cards, POGs, and toys. Fantastic door prizes, action figures, and collectibles. Contact D.J. @ 713-335-SHOW (7469).

MAY 28, HOUSTON

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Holiday Inn Southwest, 11160 S.W. Frwy. Exit Beltway 8, 35 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

VIRGINIA

MAY 7, TYSONS CORNER

Comic Book and Trading Card Show, Tysons Ramada Hotel, 7801 Leesburg Pike (Falls Church), 80 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeff Rocen @ 703-503-5834.

JUNE 3, RICHMOND

Richmond Toy & Comic Convention, Showplace Expo Center, 3000 Mechanicsville Turnpike, Route 360 off of I-64, 380 tables @ $30 each, $4 admission (children under 12: $2), $1 off with this *Wizard* ad, 10am-4pm. Contact: Vaughn Crispin @ 412-539-8821.

WASHINGTON

MAY 21, SEATTLE

Center Con 29, Seattle Center Flag Pavilion, 100 tables @ $65 each, $3 admission, 10:30am-4:30pm. Guests: Dick Sprang, Kurt Busiek, Scott McCloud, and *Magic* artists. Call 206-822-5709 for more information, or 206-684-7200 for directions.

WEST VIRGINIA

JUNE 4, CHARLESTON

West Virginia Comic Con, Holiday Inn—Charleston House, 600 Kanawha Blvd., 38 6-foot tables @ $45 each in advance, $2.50 admission (children 6 and under: FREE), 10am-4pm. Guest: artist Steve Lieber of *Hawkman, Detective Comics* #685 and #686, and *Robin* #17. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056. ☆

If you'd like to use *Wizard's* magic to help advertise your comic book event, call Karen Evora at (914) 268-3907.

WizaRd BullPen

WE STILL SUCK!

Gritting our teeth and polishing our balls, your favorite wiry *Wizard* heroes stood proudly at the entrance to the Hi-Tor Bowling Lanes in Haverstraw, N.Y., ready for our re-match against the *InQuest* genejokes. Our team's rockin' roll call: Pat McCallum—Bowler-in-Chief! Brian Cunningham—Bowler! Andrew Kardon—Copy Bowler! Marc Wilkofsky—Contributing Bowler! Unfortunately, we quickly traded our pride for a few rounds of Industrial Strength Whupass. While *InQuest*'s Assistant Editor Mike Fasolo and closest-thing-to-a-ringer Production Director Doug Goldstein pounded in strike after lousy strike, Andrew had as much form as a stunned gerbil on ice (yeah, he blew it again)—although we cheered *InQuest* Associate Editor Matthew "Milky" Milliken who befriended the gutter. And as Brian's concern over how he looked in his bowling shoes brought his performance level way down, *IQ* Art Director Robin Ramos had several moments of ten-pin glory. "After bowling three gutters, and hearing you guys say, 'Ramos sucks,' I knew I had to go for it," he claims. All we can say is that they brought in Doug (who won like 70 pounds of bowling trophies in high school) as a stand-in for *InQuest* Editor and self-professed lousy bowler Mike Searle, who was "Feeling...queasy," but was seen looking fine the following day. Anybody else smell a rat?

REILLY OF PASSAGE!

It finally happened, and boy, are we *verklempt*: *Wizard* Marketing Associate and Victor Von Doom groupie Dan Reilly took the lovelier-than-ever Nora Haren's hand in marriage, amidst family, friends, and some bleary-eyed Wizard Press staffers. The beautiful wedding ceremony took place on a perfect Friday afternoon in March (perfect, because attending staffers got a few hours off of work for it). Of course, just like most superhero weddings, Mr. Reilly had to expect at least one blast of excitement during his. Just as he was about to place the power ring on Nora's finger, the Masters of Evil dropped in and started bustin' up the joint and pantsing the guests. *Wizard* publisher Gareb Shamus saved the day with some quick thinking, though. He waited for the evil doers to group together, and then smashed 'em all at once with his colossal ego. After Nora picked Dan up, everything went extremely well—even the reception was remarkably uneventful, as Dapper Dan handled himself maturely (and soberly), making Nora quite the happy bride. As the new Mr. and Mrs. sailed off to their Latverian honeymoon, onlookers enjoyed a moment of joyful belief that all was right with the world. Good luck to the newlyweds!

WHO ARE YOU?

DOUG GOLDSTEIN

Production Director (and "founding member"), *Wizard: The Guide To Comics*

What is it you do at *Wizard*?
I try to make sure everything we print is produced on time, and done cost-effectively.

Your favorite section in *Wizard*?
Wizard Profile.

Biggest production goof?
You're kidding if you think I'm gonna let you know.

What would your biography be called?
Ten Minutes from Now.

Favorite TV show?
It was *The Kids in the Hall*, before they canceled it—the bastards. Now it's *The Tick*.

Favorite *Trek* character?
Spock, because he was the most unique and original element of the show.

Favorite musical performers?
The entire music industry is worthless without Pink Floyd in it.

Favorite album?
The Wall, by Pink Floyd.

Who would play you in a movie?
I suppose Jeff Goldblum would be good, if he went on a serious diet.

Actress with whom you'd like to star in a film?
Kelly Preston, Arnold's girlfriend in *Twins*—the most amazing woman I've ever seen in a movie.

Favorite comic?
The entire comic industry is worthless without *Sandman* in it.

Favorite comic of all time?
Iron Man in the early #100s and early #200s was at its best. I've never enjoyed reading comics as much as that.

Aspect of today's society you find disheartening?
The Republicans have waited to regain control of Congress for decades; now that they have it, they've revealed themselves to be totally nuts.

Do you have any nicknames?
The name is Doug. If you call me Spock, I'll walk right past you.

What superpower would you want?
To be able to know, predict, and understand everything.

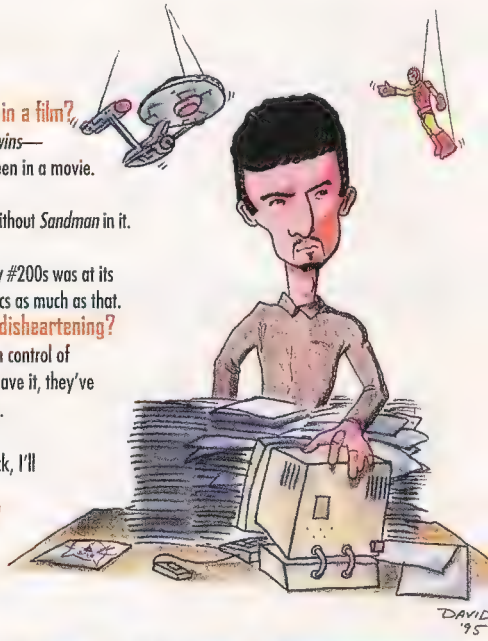

Illustration by David Prager

Top 10 Ways the Collapse of the Mexican Economy has Affected the Comic Book Industry:

10. Zorro resorts to skewering bad guys for food.
9. El Aguila can't afford to gas up the Aguilamobile.
8. Don Quixote stops jousting, gets a big friggin' gun, and joins Image.
7. Hopes of a White Tiger mini-series now under 0%.
6. *Superchilito and Pinto Boy: The Animated Series* not renewed.
5. *Las Chicas Malas Con Pechos Grandes* not selling.
4. Retailers stuck with hundreds of cases of *El Asombroso Hombre-Araña* (the clone issues).
3. Lady Rawhide reduced to table dancing at local discotheque.
2. Salsaman tour goes bankrupt—hundreds of disappointed tykes cry, "Bad Salsaman!"
1. Tarantula hangs up tights—last seen pounding down tequila shots and kicking midget ass.

✓ COLLECTOR'S SPORTSLOOK #19

Just when you thought you couldn't get enough of **Shaq**...he makes the cover of the June issue of *Sportslook*. But this time, he shares the cover (and an article) with his partner in crime, **Anfernee Hardaway**. Also, if autographs are your bag, you're in for a treat. We've put together a big ol' section on everything from the coolest signers to signed body parts. We also decided to include the second part of our **National Sports Collectors Convention contest**, as well as a chance to **win a full signed set of Signature Rookies football cards**. From Shaq to Rollie's autographed fingers to the National, we've got it all in the June *Sportslook*, shipping in April! **$3.95**

✓ INQUEST #2

The newest, coolest guide to collectible card games rolls on with an interview with *Magic* artist extraordinaire **Anson Maddocks**, an ***Illuminati*** article delving into the bizarre and paranoid world of conspiracies, and our look at the never-before-seen (and never-to-be-sold) ***Star Trek* expansion set!** We also cast the ***Magic: The Gathering Movie: The Good Guys***, and drop you in the middle of the **Arabian Nights Djinn-Efreet War!** Plus, we have a White Wolf contest, in which your card art can appear in an upcoming *Rage* expansion set, and we're givin' you a chance to **win your own customized *Magic* deck!** It all happens in May! **$3.50**

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E.G.O.*

What Do You Want From Me?

by Todd McFarlane

As a creative producer of comic books, one of the things you must sit down and look at daily is how to keep your audience entertained and keep them buying your books on a regular basis. With the comic book market being in a sort of lull at this point, I'm somewhat confused as to what you, the readers, want out of your comics.

From what I've seen, the major crossovers seem to be a big thing with the readers. A good example of this is the recent "Age of Apocalypse" crossover from Marvel's X-Men titles, which was very popular with the fans (albeit at a higher price, no less). Also big is when a major character either dies, gets maimed, or goes insane and then a new character takes over his or her identity (*a la* recent stories involving DC's Batman, Superman, and Green Lantern characters). Readers also seem to buy up variant covers which have the potential to rise in value. Readers seem to respond well to all of these types of examples, quite simply, because you want them. Or do you?

When you buy comics, do you sometimes feel like you've been tricked by publishers into buying them? In my opinion, a lot of these popular types of storylines are just a way of tricking you into A) buying the product, and B) in the case of "Age of Apocalypse," raising the price of the book. (The price of the X-books "increased" when Marvel stopped printing the less expensive "regular editions" of these comics.) And when I was a young fan, I knew that when the price of comics increased, I either had to cut a book or three, or else mow another lawn for more cash.

I can't believe how much the price of comics has gone up over the past couple of years. They're averaging at two bucks apiece now. With that said, readers' budgets can't allow them to buy everything they want. There must be some sort of selection process as to what you want to buy.

So, are you guys clinging to three or four different titles and their spin-offs, are you somehow expanding your budget, or are you simply buying the books because you've got the last hundred issues and don't want to stop your collection? And hey, I know what that's like 'cause I've been there.

What I'm looking at, in the case of *Spawn*, is whether or not I should do any of these things. Would you like me to kill him off and bring him back? Would you like to see him cross over with every other character in the Image Universe? Would you like to see him maimed and replaced by some wacko, only to have the original come back and trash the new guy?

I just want to know if there's some resistance to these situations, or if you think that's cool. If it *is* cool, then I'll have to start thinking about possibly putting out a second monthly *Spawn* companion book, or more mini-series throughout the year. I'm trying to stick to a certain way

of business, but if the fans dictate otherwise, then I'll have to change my ways.

If anybody is willing to give me insight, I'll hear you out. And there's even a bribe in this. (Hey, you don't get nothing for nothing, as the saying goes.) I want to know what keeps you buying on a regular basis. In return, the best responses will get a couple of free signed comics. Write to me in care of the address in the letters page of *Spawn*. ☆

Todd McFarlane is a co-founder of Image Comics, and is the writer and artist of Spawn.

ADDENDUM: Oh, and by the way. About Marvel Comics announcing that it's distributing exclusively through Heroes World...I told you so.

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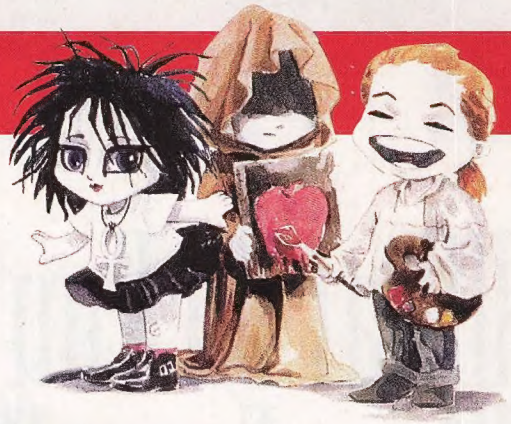
*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, its editorial staff, or Image Comics.



Here's looking at...JILL THOMPSON

by Ruth Morrison

How did Jill Thompson get into comics? "By perseverance," the 29-year-old artist smiles. "By not taking 'no' for an answer."

Currently drawing *The Invisibles* and scheduled for a *Swamp Thing* story with Mark Millar, both for DC's Vertigo imprint, Thompson's done...everything. Starting with 'Banana Man' (from *Just Imagine Comix and Stories*, a one-shot anthology published by Just Imagine), Thompson's résumé boasts (in no particular order) many issues of *Elementals* for Comico, *Speed Racer* for Now, *The Scarlet Letter* for First Comics's *Classics Illustrated* series, *Wonder Woman*, *Sandman*, *Black Orchid* (all three for DC), and *The Badger: Shattered Mirror* for Dark Horse Comics, not to mention numerous pin-ups, gaming manuals, and the occasional trading card. One would think that Thompson never knew a word of discouragement.

Wrong.

"I got so many rejection letters," the Chicago native chuckles. "I used to save them, and dream of when I could throw them back at people and say, 'You rejected me.'"

Why didn't Thompson give up? "I always wanted to draw comics," she says simply. "I wanted to tell stories. I knew this as long as I could remember."

Growing up on the Archie comics her father bought her, one day Thompson noticed a particular comic at the bottom of the pile. "It was an X-Men book, the beginning of the 'Dark Phoenix Saga' [which ran through *Uncanny X-Men* #129-#138]. Here was this powerful woman who was able to do all this...stuff! She was stronger than any of the men, she was stronger than anyone. I'd never seen that! I wanted to be able to do what she did. I thought it would be cool! I was hooked."

Eventually, Thompson would even like to publish her own comics, "or at least, drawing and controlling something that I own and that I've created."

However, Thompson's life is not exclusive to comics. "I spent four-and-a-half years in an improvisational comedy troupe. We'd be the opening act for all these comedy clubs. It was a really strange lifestyle.

"To continue in comics, I think you have to have something else in your life beyond comics, or you burn out. Especially when you work at home. People say, 'It must be cool to work at your house.' But then, it's always there. It's always saying, 'You know, you should be working. What are you doing relaxing? You should be doing another page...'"

As far as the art form of comics itself goes, Thompson tries to please herself. "I have to like it first. It's great when other people appreciate it, but I'd be embarrassed to show someone something I didn't like."

First comic read...

The first comic I read would have to be a "Peanuts" compilation.

Favorite comic of all time...

I don't know about "favorite," but one that scared the hell out of me was a *House of Mystery* issue. It had a Bernie Wrightson illustration that showed Abel chained in this tank of water, with bananas all around.

Favorite work of your own...

Currently, *The Badger: Shattered Mirror*. Mike Baron wrote it, I got to pencil and ink it, and it was a great story. It kicked ass!

Comics you currently read...

Anything by Paul Pope. Also, *Optic Nerve*, by Adrian Tomine, and *Red Dragon*, from Comico/Northstar. I really like *True Swamp*, by Jon Lewis. *Cud* is my favorite book, by Terry Laban.

Favorite character...

Jughead. He always has been.

The one person you'd like to meet...

I'd like to go shopping for clothes with Patsy Cline. I'd like to eat a lot of horrible food with Elvis. I'd like to shoot guns at telephone poles with William S. Burroughs.

Most embarrassing moment...

I bought a motorcycle and I didn't know how to ride it. I blew more money than I made in three months; money that I had saved up for rent. I tried to learn how to ride it on the way home. I hit trees! I kept falling over—once in a major intersection—and I couldn't get up!

Superpower you would most want...

I don't want one; they seem to be much more trouble than they're worth.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....

Pickles. I have always liked salty things.

Things you collect...

Odd cooking utensils. I've also got bits of skeletal stuff. I have a real human rib, given to me as a Christmas present. Most of it is representative, not real. But I have real bones, and I have a badger skeleton.

Favorite pastime or hobby...

Reading, but I don't have enough time to do it anymore. And, though it sounds silly, I like to lift weights. I used to laugh at guys who said that!

Favorite TV show...

X-Files.

Last good book you read...

The Hot Zone, by Richard Preston.

Last good movie you saw...

Murder in the First. It was intense and riveting, and everything the ad says it is.

If you had the power of the Beyonder...

I would try to make sure that people who created things got credit and monetary compensation. He's that stupid leisure suit-wearing guy, isn't he?

Why do you read *Wizard*?

To see what the Image guys are up to! ☆

Photo by Ruth's boyfriend, courtesy of Jill Thompson. Death, Destiny, and Destruction ™ & © DC Comics.
Special thanks to Mark Sassa for helping us out. (He knows why.)

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